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A CHARGE

DELIVERED

TO THE CLERGY OF THE
UNITED DIOCESES

OF

OSSORY, FERNS, AND LEIGHLIN,

AT HIS ORDINARY VISITATION IN OCTOBER,

1863,

BY

JAMES THOMAS O'BRIEN, D.D.

BISHOP OF OSSORY, FERNS, AND LEIGHLIN.

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A C H A R G E.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

A LEARNED author—with whose valuable but somewhat dry work, every student in Divinity has some acquaintance, though a thorough knowledge of it is possessed by very few—relates the history of the Christian Church in each successive century,—from its foundation to its Reformation,—under the division of its external and its internal history. Each of these heads is subdivided; and one of the subdivisions of the external history is always devoted to the public events which were unfavourable to the interests of the Church; and one of the subdivisions of the internal history, to the heresies, and dissensions, and divisions which prevailed within it, during the same period. The space occupied by these more unfavourable subdivisions bears a very different proportion in different centuries to the happier part of the Church's history for the time. But still, as you must have felt, in all of them, from the very first, it is quite large enough to leave a very painful impression upon every reader's mind,—often

bringing back to the memory what is so finely said by a pious and thoughtful divine, of the common course of God's appointments for His Church, that "though ordinarily God would have vicissitudes of summer and winter, day and night, that the Church may grow extensively in the summer of prosperity, and intensively and radically in the winter of adversity, yet usually their night is longer than their day, and that day itself hath its storms and tempests."¹

If the history of our Church were to be written upon Mosheim's plan, I am afraid that the few years which have passed since I last addressed you on an occasion like the present would contribute more than their proper share to the unfavourable subdivision, both in its external and its internal history. No doubt, we have had many and great mercies to acknowledge, under both heads, in the interval. But still, not a little has occurred, under both, which was calculated to fill the mind of every loyal son of the Church with shame, and sorrow, and fear.

And to begin with matters which belong to the Church's *internal* history. When my last Charge was delivered, men's minds were very painfully engaged by a publication, which, under the unpretending title of "Essays and Reviews," was then fast advancing to the very unenviable notoriety

¹ *Baxter's Narrative*, ap. Wordsworth, *Eccles. Biography*, vol. iv. p. 509.

to which it has since fully attained. It was an attempt to present to the Church some of the results of the free application to the Bible of the deeper philosophy and more accurate habits of investigation which modern writers have brought to the illustration of other ancient records. These results appeared in the shape of doubts, and difficulties, and definite disbelief affecting many of the facts and many of the doctrines which form the matter of the faith of the Church; and reaching to the sacred volume itself from which this body of truth has been derived: assailing not only its cosmogony and its history, but its theology and its morality also; and so explaining away its inspiration, as to leave it hardly a vestige of Divine authority, and, thereby, to leave religion without any sure foundation.

There was quite enough in such a publication to shock and alarm the many who had been living on in entire unconsciousness of the great changes in opinion and feeling which were growing up around them in the Church. And even those who were aware that a great revolution had begun were startled at the evidence which this book gave of the extent to which it had advanced.

When men began to look about, as they soon did, for the causes which had led to so great a change, they in general agreed in regarding it as sufficiently accounted for by the prevalence of the study of German Theology. And I am not dis-

posed to doubt that an important place is due to this, among the causes to which the great change referred to ought to be ascribed. For though I am very far from sympathizing with the vague and somewhat ignorant terror with which German Divinity is regarded by some, as if it contained nothing but evil, yet, on the other hand, I would not be understood to deny that the good which it does contain is so intermingled with evil, that it can only be safely sought for by those who are alive to the danger which accompanies the pursuit, and who engage in it circumspectly and with proper safeguards. And I do not think it can reasonably be doubted that the ardour with which the study of German theology has for some time been pursued, without caution or safeguards, or apparently any apprehension that they were needed, had done a great deal to bring about the great change of thought and sentiment of which the publication in question gave such decisive proof.

But however true this is, it only goes a part of the way in accounting for the phenomena. For what was it that secured so favourable a reception for German theology? Cardinal Wiseman says, that, while all converts from Romanism who have published accounts of their own cases agree in representing their conversion as the effect of reading the Holy Scriptures, they at the same time show clearly that this is a great mistake; for they show clearly, that, however unconsciously, they were

really already Protestants, when they began to read the Bible; and that, in fact, it was only because they had come to the study of it with minds already imbued with the principle of Protestantism, that they found therein sufficient reasons for casting off their allegiance to their own Church.¹ And I think we may say that when men received cordially the Rationalist divines of Germany, studied their writings with eager interest, and adopted promptly the tone and substance of them, they must have been already, to a considerable extent, imbued with the spirit of Rationalism. The question, therefore, still presses, How was this preparation made? The theology which had exercised most influence over the Church for many years, which had for a good while attracted to itself a

¹ WISEMAN, *Lectures on the Catholic Church*, p. 19.

The Cardinal states that the reason which every one of these individuals gives for abandoning the communion of the Church of Rome is, that, having carefully read the Bible, he "could not find in it transubstantiation or auricular confession, that he could not discover in it one word of purgatory or of venerating images." But this is hardly ingenuous. For, though it is quite sufficient to condemn any Church that she teaches as *Articles of Faith what can neither be found in the Bible nor proved thereby*, yet the Reformation does not rest its justification merely on the ground, that for the distinctive doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome there is no authority in Scripture, but on this ground also, that some of them are clearly against the authority of Scripture. And as all Roman Catholics who adopt the Reformed faith sincerely and intelligently must be aware that both charges have been made and established by the Reformers against the Church of Rome, so I believe that it has rarely, if ever, happened that any such converts have published an account of the process by which they have been led to abandon Rome, without distinctly stating their conviction of the truth of both charges.

majority of the most intellectual and cultivated of the clergy, and which seemed almost to have monopolized the class in the English Universities from which the new members of the clerical body were to be drawn, was diametrically opposed to Rationalism. It exalted not reason but authority. The prevailing tendencies under the teaching of that school were, not to extend unduly the domain of reason, but to reduce its lawful bounds,—not to make it the judge of things too high for it, but in all things to bring it into unnatural submission to authority. And it seems, at first sight at least, very strange that it should have made way for a school of so opposite a type.

But the truth is that every unnatural system of restraint is likely to issue in some form of unbridled licence. When the mind has been for a time held in undue thralldom,—whether by usurped authority, or by lawful authority tyrannically exercised,—and then recovers its liberty, it is rarely content with simply emancipating itself from the usurpation or tyranny under which it has suffered : it generally refuses to submit to the most legitimate authority, or the most wholesome control. And so, as it seems, we have no reason to wonder in the present case, if, when men's minds became impatient of the teaching which had brought them into slavish subjection to human authority in matters of religion, they were disposed to listen to teachers who proposed to set them free from sub-

mission to all authority, even to the authority of the Word of God.

And I cannot but remind you that long since,—not far, indeed, from twenty years ago,—I called your attention to some remarkable indications of an approximation of these extremes, which were even then visible. I then pointed out to you (in a Charge since published) that the extreme section of the Tractarian party had begun to apply to the legends of Hagiology, principles which were closely akin to, if not absolutely identical with, those which the Rationalism of Germany, at its highest point of development, had applied to the Word of God generally, and specially to the history of our Lord.¹

But whether or not this be the proper mode of accounting for it, I believe it is undoubtedly the fact that German theology has to a very great extent possessed itself, both in the Church of England and in the English Universities, of the place which was for a good many years held by theology of a widely-different character. And I should be inclined to fear that, though it has been so vigorously and ably resisted, it is likely to maintain for a time the ground that it has won, and even to make further advances, before it is beaten back.

The truth is that a man can hardly take up any line of study in which German students have not preceded him. And wherever they have gone

¹ *Charge*, 1845, pp. 174—184.

before, their patient industry, and patient though not always sober thought, have accumulated a mass of very valuable materials to aid and abridge the labours of their successors.

Their own labours take in, as I have said, almost the whole range of human knowledge : but upon no subject have these industrious students expended more time and pains than upon Divinity. And as in Reformed Communions it is generally acknowledged that all Divinity—all that deserves the name—is to be derived from the Holy Scriptures, and to be tested thereby, whenever, from whatever causes, learned men in Protestant countries were led to assign a high place to Divinity among the studies to which their lives were devoted, they could not but attach great importance to all that was calculated to aid and guide in the interpretation of the Scriptures. And accordingly German divines have laboured long and diligently to provide materials for the right interpretation of the Sacred Volume. Ancient History, Ancient Geography, Ancient Philosophy, the arts, and sciences, and literature, the laws, and customs, and manners of the Ancient World, both Jew and Gentile ; the languages of the Old and New Testament, all have been studied by them with unwearied diligence and corresponding success. And all the fruits of these laborious researches have been made, in their different places, to minister to the great end of the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

No one can undervalue such aids to this great end, without virtually denying the reality of the human element in the Sacred Scriptures. But on the other hand, when they are regarded as sufficient of themselves to secure the accomplishment of the end, the Divine element of Scripture is denied or forgotten. Such aids and instruments only reach to the lower element of the Revealed Word; and if they are employed by those who do not believe in any higher element, or who think that the human mind is able, with such help, to deal with the higher no less than with the lower, the result must be a failure in all that regards the former, that is, in all that is of most importance in the end in view.

And, unfortunately, those who contributed most to providing these means, and who brought the largest stock of them to the actual work of interpretation, were often grievously wanting in the humility and reverence with which that work ought to be approached. And they have, in consequence, not only missed the highest revealed truths, but have done more than could have been done with more limited means to put them beyond the reach of others. And thus they have done more than has ever been done before to illustrate and confirm the great truth, that *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him*; for they have shown that, when this *godly fear* is wanting, all other means of attaining to that knowledge will be unavailing. A

man may have free access to the *field*, and may search diligently in it, and discover in it a great deal that is of inferior value: but, without higher guidance, he will fail to find therein the *pearl of great price*.

But, as I intimated, the results of the labours of these men have not been merely negative. Their interpretation of the Word of God has not merely failed to draw from it the highest truths which it contains, but has drawn from it, in their stead, grievous errors. And all the ingenuity, and all the learning, and all the industry which ought to have been made subservient to the discovery and the maintenance of truth, having been first made instruments to draw false doctrines from the Sacred Volume, have been then further perverted by being employed as weapons in their defence.

Those who have been accustomed, from their earliest years, to look upon the Bible as God's Word, *to hear and receive it with meek heart and due reverence*—with something of the feelings of awe with which they would listen to God Himself, if He were to speak to them—naturally recoil from the bold and free—and somewhat more than bold and free—treatment which it receives at the hands of those who regard it as a collection of merely human compositions, some of them abounding in errors of every kind—errors in fact and errors in principle—and who feel warranted and constrained, in the cause of truth, to cross-

examine it, in somewhat of the spirit and style in which a lawyer attempts to extract the truth from a suspected and unwilling witness. This boldness is very revolting to most minds at the outset; but after the first shock is over, it has many attractions for not a few of those who were most revolted by it. It soon begins to be looked upon as a mark of superiority of mind, and so contributes not a little to recommend the views against which it raised a strong prejudice at the first.

And I ought, perhaps, here to add, that this disagreeable quality of German theology is not absolutely confined to writers of the class of which I have been speaking. It not unfrequently appears, though of course in a very softened form, in the most orthodox divines of the country. There have been at all times since the Reformation, Divines of deep piety in Germany. But for a good while they were very inferior in learning and ability to those of a different description; and while this continued to be the case, it is needless to say at how great a disadvantage the cause of truth must have stood in so highly intellectual and cultivated a community. But now, for several years, there has been no want there of good men, who could not be denied a high place amongst the most learned and able Divines of their age and country, and who have devoted their powers and their attainments to the defence of truth, with all the zeal

and energy which were so long exhibited only by its assailants.

The theology of Germany, therefore, now provides both the bane and antidote. If it may be truly said that no writers of any other country have done so much as German Divines to impair the reverence which the Bible claims as the Word of God, or to unsettle belief in the great truths which the Church has drawn from it, it is also true, that, in all that has been done to repair this great evil, some of their compatriots have taken a larger and a more important part than the Divines of any other land. But in using their works, it is necessary to remember that the writers have been brought up in a very different school from that in which our Divines have had their training; that they have been always accustomed to unlimited freedom and boldness in speaking of subjects which are treated by us with cautious reverence; and have been accustomed to regard as still open, questions which with us have been long since finally closed. And the consequence is, that one who enters upon the study of the orthodox Divines of Germany with our habits of thought and feeling, and without being prepared for the great difference in this respect which exists between them and Divines of the same class in our Church, is likely to be startled and offended at the instances which he will come upon from time to time, even in authors of the soundest views and the deepest piety, of what he

will feel to be unbecoming freedom and boldness in reference to high, and holy, and mysterious subjects.

Such passages do not necessarily prove anything beyond the great difference between the schools in which the writer and the reader have been brought up. But they will undoubtedly be regarded, by such a reader as I have supposed, as conclusive proofs of an utter want of sobriety and reverence; and he may, not improbably, in consequence, put away the book from him altogether, or read it on with the alienation, and impatience, and distrust, with which one naturally reads the product of a rash and irreverent mind. But this may be a very great mistake, however commendable the feelings are in which it originates—a mistake, which does great injustice to the writer, and inflicts serious loss upon the reader. For what startles and offends us in such works is often a mere matter of tone and style, and really goes no deeper. And this we ought to be able to understand from what is matter of every-day observation, on the other side. For one sees continually men, from early habit, using, with reference to sacred objects, language which expresses strong convictions and deep reverence, without any corresponding thoughts or feelings. And it is just as easy to conceive that others may use, with the same insensibility to their real force, words and phrases which, strictly interpreted, would exhibit unsettled views, or a sceptical spirit,

or a hard, and coarse, and irreverent character of mind. And this is actually the case with some of the orthodox writers of Germany, who, notwithstanding, are not merely men of true piety, but of a tender and reverential spirit.

But while I say this, I should be sorry if I were understood as regarding the difference, in this respect, between their style and ours, as a matter of light importance; or the difference between their system and ours, as only affecting style. I am sure that a reverent and submissive tone in dealing with the highest sacred subjects—a tone which recognises the narrow limits of the human mind with reference to them—is not only the natural fruit of a reverent and humble spirit, but that it exercises an important effect in cherishing and maintaining such a spirit. And I should regret deeply, and should regard it as a grievous injury to our clergy, if familiarity with the writings of German Divines, and the consequent admiration for them, which, in some respects, is so well grounded, led to any assimilation to them in the points referred to. But, on the other hand, I think, as I have already intimated, that we should incur no slight loss if we allowed the difference which exists—and which, until *they* change, will I hope always continue to exist—between us and them, to repel us from them, or to lead us to form so unfavourable a judgment of them as would interfere with our deriving from them a full measure of the advantage which

a well-regulated and diligent study of them is calculated to obtain for us. For there are many important subjects, subsidiary to the interpretation of Holy Writ, which we may study with most effect with their aid.

But I have dwelt too long upon this, particularly as, though it is of much practical importance in itself, especially at the present day, it has none in any direct connexion with the subject immediately in hand. For however much of the danger which "Essays and Reviews" brought to the Church is to be traced ultimately to German Divinity, you do not need to resort to the same source for full protection against it. The book has been answered by various writers of our own Church, and, on the whole, so thoroughly answered, as to leave it little power of doing injury, except to those who are too self-confident or too indolent to avail themselves of the means of defence which the ability and the learning of others have placed within their reach.

The Church had scarcely recovered from the painful surprise which this work raised, when it received a still more violent shock from another publication which is even still in progress. I need hardly say that I refer to "The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined," by the Bishop of Natal. This work, which is of the same

school as the "Essays and Reviews," is, in some important respects, an advance upon that publication, inasmuch as it is a more systematic and avowed attempt to deprive the portion of Holy Scripture of which it treats, not merely of the authority of a Divinely-inspired record, but of the credit which is due to any history that is not the product of ignorance or fraud. And the position of the author in this case aggravated the offence which such a work would have given from whatever quarter it had come. It was painful and startling enough to see clergymen of the Church openly avowing or intelligibly intimating doubt or disbelief, and labouring to propagate doubt or disbelief, of truths which they had solemnly professed to believe, and which they were under solemn obligations to preach and to teach. But it was still more painful and more alarming to see the same work carried on—the same principles openly avowed and earnestly advocated—by one, who, besides being bound by the same professions and the same engagements, lay under weighty additional obligations and responsibilities, as holding a high office in which he was intrusted with the duty of imposing these professions and engagements, and enforcing the observance of them, upon others.

The writer states his object at the outset, and professes a proper anxiety, and upon proper grounds, to do this distinctly and without any reserve, justly

regarding himself as bound by the momentous consequences involved, to use no rhetorical artifices which might entrap his readers ; but on the contrary, to let them know from the first where he means to conduct them, that so they may, from the first, watch carefully every step of his argument, and apply the most rigorous tests to each inference as it is drawn.

His object, he states to be, to prove that the account of the Exodus which we have in Scripture, whatever value it may have in other ways, *is not historically true*.

And his mode of proving this position is by showing that it contains statements which are so much at variance with the course and laws of Nature, as well as so inconsistent with each other, that they cannot possibly be true. But it is to be remarked, because it is a difference upon an important point from the Continental divines with whom it would be most natural to class him, that the impossibilities on which he relies are not the miracles which are recorded in the Book—whether miraculous acts, or Divine communications which were also miraculous. These he professes himself prepared to believe, if the ordinary history—that which relates what is not miraculous in its nature, or represented as miraculous by the historian—were true. If that part of the history however be proved to be false, he expects, and I think with good reason, that no one will maintain that the miracles

which it records are to be received as true. And accordingly it is from that part of the history—the part which professes to record natural, not supernatural events—that the alleged inconsistencies and impossibilities are adduced; and it is with the object of proving the falsehood of that part of the history that they are put forward.

They are chiefly connected with the numbers which occur in the history, and are an essential element of it. The number which lies at the foundation of all the rest, is the number of men fit to bear arms, from twenty years of age and upwards, who left the land of bondage. These are said to have amounted to 600,000, which, upon common principles, gives the whole number of the nation as about two and a half millions, certainly not under two millions.

Here is the fundamental impossibility at starting, from which, in the progress of the narrative, so many others are derived. It is a plain impossibility, it is said, according to the established rate of the increase of our race, that in four generations (which is the number of generations that the Bishop fixes upon, for the whole people, during their sojourn in Egypt) the family of Jacob could have amounted to such a number. And with this fundamental impossibility, others are connected at every step in the story, from the very first. It was impossible to have moved such a host in the way described, in the

time, and under the circumstances described, when the Exodus began. And setting aside that impossibility, and supposing them in motion, it was impossible to have supported such a host in the desert. That impossibility, indeed, is met and provided for by a miracle. But there was no such miraculous provision, as it appears, for the support of their flocks and herds. And yet it seems just as impossible that they should be supported in *the waste howling wilderness*. Then as to the encampments on their way—nothing can be more orderly, in description, than all the arrangements, under which we see Israel *abiding in their tents, according to their tribes*. But the moment that we descend to details, we light upon difficulties which it seems impossible to get over. Where did the tents for so vast a multitude come from? is the first difficulty that suggests itself. And others connected with the details of daily life follow fast upon it, for which we in vain attempt to supply any reasonable solution. Then the offices which the law lays upon the priests give rise to a distinct class of difficulties—it may be said, indeed, impossibilities—when the number of the priests, and the number of the host for which these offices were to be performed are considered.

All these and many other difficulties of the same nature and connected in the same way with the fundamental difficulty of the number of the nation at the Exodus, are stated by the Bishop of Natal,

with great perspicuity and point, and pressed with much force, evidently under a strong conviction that they are all well grounded, and that they completely establish his thesis. He says, indeed, that, if his conclusions were only *speculations*, if they were only matter of higher or lower *probability*, he should not feel that he had any right to publish what is calculated so painfully to disturb the faith of many. But, unless he greatly deceives himself, he says, the main result of his examination of the Pentateuch,—viz. that the narrative, whatever may be its value and meaning, cannot be regarded as historically true—this is not a matter of doubtful speculation at all, it is a simple question of facts.

There are various auxiliary proofs, which sustain his main argument. One of these is derived from objections to the morality of the Pentateuch. Commands and precepts are there represented as coming from God, which, it is maintained, could not have had Him for their author, as they are at variance with principles which lie at the foundation of all religion.

Objections of this class were made large use of by some early English infidels, and from time to time by their successors, down to Paine. They had never been left for any time without a sufficient answer. But when they were pressed by the last-named profane scoffer—as they were, with characteristic coarseness and bitterness—they

were so conclusively answered that they have ever since been generally kept in the background. And it is deeply to be regretted that they should now reappear under the auspices of a Bishop of the Church. The answers to which I have referred, it is true, remain. But while it requires a measure of reasoning powers and of sobriety and fairness of mind to make a right use of them, none of these qualities are needed to take in the full force of the objections. And that they are commended by Episcopal authority will be quite enough to secure them a favourable reception from many, who have little ability, and it may be, less disposition to weigh carefully and dispassionately the arguments by which they are refuted.¹

¹ The authors of "The Bible in the Workshop" bear direct testimony, from their own experience, to the actual occurrence of some of the evil effects, which I could only speak of as likely to follow from the fact that these charges against Scripture have been put forward by a Bishop. They state that in the placards of an infidel Lecture Hall, where they had often listened to the same assertions and same arguments as those which are put forward in the *Critical Examination*, they saw it announced, "that extracts from the Bishop's book were to be read on Sunday evening before the usual lecture." And they further state, that the reason for this strange advertisement was, that "the favourite orator being absent, it was feared that the funds would suffer, and the Bishop's book was selected to make up for the usual amount of blasphemous ribaldry." Whether they make this latter statement upon sufficient authority, or not, may perhaps be doubted, but there can be no doubt that they are trustworthy witnesses, when they depose to what they actually saw. And their evidence is just as little open to doubt, when they testify that the bishop's work "*has made Christian men in workshops the jibe and sport of the profane and unbelieving; and has strengthened the hands of infidels and atheists, in a manner, and to a degree, that the most sanguine amongst their number had scarcely dared to hope for, and*

But the collateral argument on which the Bishop seems to have bestowed most pains, and on which, therefore, I suppose he would be disposed to rest most, is a critical one, derived from the use of the different names of God, Elohim and Jehovah, which is made not only to confirm the destructive part of the work, but to contribute also to the constructive part of it. This latter part is only opened far enough to show that, though the author is obliged to take away from us all grounds for believing in the inspiration of the Pentateuch, its authenticity, or its historical truth, he has something to give us in the place of what he has taken away.

The fact of the exclusive or predominant use of one of these words in different parts of Scripture is noticed, and some attempt made to account for it, by Greek and Latin Fathers, by mediæval divines, by Jewish commentators of different ages, and, finally, by both Protestant and Roman Catholic writers at the time of the Reformation and since. But I believe it was not till about the middle of the eighteenth century that it was made the foundation of the theory that the Pentateuch was not the work of a single author. This speculation was first broached in France, but it seems to have made little way until it was taken

weakened the efforts, and discouraged the minds, of Christian working men in exactly the same proportion."—*The Bible in the Workshop*, Preface.

up and elaborated in Germany, where it has since appeared under various modifications, and has been at intervals a good deal discussed.

The Bishop of Natal has, of course, made great use of the labours of others, here as well as elsewhere. But he treats the subject in his own style, and goes fully and minutely into it, not only with reference to the first four books of the Pentateuch and Joshua, but to other books of Scripture, and especially to the Psalms. And the result of his examination is, that the Elohist and Jehovist portions (as they are called, from the prevailing use of the different names of God) of the book of Genesis are by different hands and of different dates. He does not decide against the hypothesis that there were two writers of the Elohist portion, but he seems to lean to the theory that there was but one, who is also the author of Ex. vi.; and who probably tells the story there of the way in which the name Jehovah was communicated to Moses, because he was himself introducing the name at the time as the name of the God of Israel, and wished to commend it by this legend to the reverence of the people. Having proved to his own satisfaction that it could not have been written as early as the time of Moses and Joshua, or later than David, he finds many indications which point to Samuel as the actual author of it: and this conclusion is decisively confirmed by a critical examination of the Psalms.

Samuel, therefore, is to be regarded as the writer of the Elohist portion of the Book of Genesis, and of small parts of the Books of Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua. His work, however, though it was not a history, is not to be regarded as a pure fiction. It was based upon legendary stories, floating about in the memories of the Hebrew tribes, concerning their ancestors and of former great events in their history,—how they once fled in a large body out of Egypt, under an eminent leader such as Moses,—how they had been led through a great and terrible wilderness, wherein many perished in various ways, but the survivors went on until they came to the land of Canaan and conquered it. As there was some foundation in truth for these legendary tales, they would be handed down from generation to generation by tradition. But in this way of transmission, it is easy to see how such exaggerations as abound in the history would be introduced, natural facts magnified into prodigies, and a few thousands multiplied into two millions. Samuel had many opportunities of collecting such materials during the active part of his course, and leisure to digest them in his later years, after he had withdrawn from public life, during which he threw them into the form of a continuous narrative, filling up the chasms which such materials would leave, perhaps to a great extent, out of his own imagination. And the work which was begun by him would be followed up and completed by his

disciples. But as at this time the use of the name Jehovah had become common, they used it freely : and this is the account to be given of the authorship of the Jehovistic portions of the first four books of the Pentateuch and Joshua.

This settles that the Jehovistic writer of the Pentateuch cannot have written earlier than the later part of David's life, while there are reasons to conclude that he could not have written long after Samuel. But even this theory will not enable us to separate the whole of the books of the Pentateuch and Joshua into two distinct parts—one the work of the Elohist, and the other of the Jehovists. There are texts that cannot be brought into either division. These are interpolations ; and it is settled that they are all by one hand, that of a writer who at a later period, about the time of Josiah, revised the first four books of the Pentateuch, and added the Book of Deuteronomy.

Who this writer was forms an additional question, which is considered at length in the third part of the work, which is the last that has appeared. And the Bishop ends in settling that (as had been before suggested in Germany, though the theory seems to have met with little favour there) the author of the Book of Deuteronomy was Jeremiah. The time at which he flourished agrees with the date of the work as fixed on independent grounds ; and a close critical examination of his Prophecies, compared with Deuteronomy,

strongly confirms the conclusion. The good dispositions of the king, the depressed state of the people after the reign of Manasseh, and the carrying away of the ten tribes, might have suggested the thought that it was a favourable time to make an impression upon them, by which they might be terrified into giving up finally and for ever their idolatrous practices, if only they could be made to feel that God had Himself threatened to punish this sin. Such threatenings had been often delivered in vain by the Prophets ; but if they came through their venerated Lawgiver they might hear. The old book of the Law however, from the variety of its matter, was not fitted to accomplish the object. But if the spirit of the old law were summed up in a powerful address, adapted to the circumstances of the times and coming directly from Moses, the desired impression might possibly be made. Such an address is the Book of Deuteronomy. If it were written by Jeremiah in concert with Hilkiah the Priest, it is easy to understand how it might have been found by the latter in the Temple, as the history describes it to have been found. And as to the fact, which appears from the history, that Huldah the prophetess also seems to have been acquainted with the book—which would be very intelligible if it were the work of Moses, a part of the Law, but which seems not so easy to understand on the supposition that it was a recent fabrication by Jeremiah—we have only to suppose

that she too had been taken into the pious plot by the prophet, and her knowledge of the book is easily and naturally accounted for.

It will probably occur to most persons, that this theory of the origin of the book and of its discovery, ascribes to Jeremiah—to say nothing of Hilki'ah, of whom we know less—an amount of falsehood and fraud of which it is not easy to believe him guilty. The author acknowledges that this seems to be the case at first sight, but he thinks that a little closer consideration shows that the impression rests on no good grounds. For “we must not forget that Jeremiah was a prophet, and as such, habitually disposed to regard all the special impulses of his mind to religious activity, as direct inspirations from the Divine Source of truth. To us, with our inductive training and scientific habits of mind, *the correct statement of facts* appears of the first necessity; and consciously to mistake them, or to state as a fact what we do not know or believe from *external* testimony to be fact, is a crime against truth. But to a man who believed himself to be in *immediate* communication with the Source of all truth, this condition must have been reversed. The *inner* voice, which he believed to be the voice of the Divine Teacher, would become all-powerful; would silence at once all doubts and questionings; what it ordered him to do, he would do without hesitation, as by direct command of God, and all considerations as to

morality or immorality would either not be entertained at all, or would only take the form of misgivings as to whether, possibly, in any particular case, the command itself was really Divine.”¹

It sometimes happens, I suppose, to every one, to fall in with a mode of solving a difficulty which is a much greater difficulty than the one that it is intended to remove. But I should think that there are few whose experience in this way can parallel this case. The difficulty in this case is to understand how a pious prophet could reconcile it to his conscience, in order to do good to his countrymen, to devise and execute a fraud, including express statements that God did and said what He did not say or do. And this difficulty is met, and, as it is supposed, removed, by explaining that a prophet of old was really a fanatic of the most dangerous character,—one who took his own strong impulses for commands from God, and was prepared, therefore, to act in obedience to them as a matter of duty, without any chance, as it appears, of being restrained from doing wrong, unless the nature of the act should awaken some doubt whether the command was really Divine; while it at the same time appears that to awaken such a doubt, it must be more plainly a sin than a lie, even a lie against God is!

It seems a strange state of mind in which a man finds it easier to believe this of Jeremiah—and as

¹ Part iii. pp. 427, 428.

it seems of Jeremiah as a prophet, and so of all the prophets—than to distrust the soundness of the reasoning which has led him to the conclusion, that Jeremiah was the author of the book of Deuteronomy!

But, as you, no doubt, are aware, the Bishop of Natal chooses to abide by his conclusions, even when they lead to consequences derogatory to One greater than Jeremiah. When he had proved, as he thought, that the Pentateuch is not merely an uninspired book but one totally devoid of historical truth, so that it could not have been written by Moses, or by any honest contemporary of the Exodus,—it could not but occur to every one acquainted with the New Testament how irreconcilably this conclusion was at variance with the testimony of the Blessed Lord, who refers repeatedly to the Pentateuch as the work of Moses, and as a true history, and as inspired. This would seem to be a serious objection to the Bishop of Natal's conclusion, however it were drawn. He does not overlook this difficulty, but his mode of dealing with it is not only utterly unsatisfactory, but involves collateral questions of very great importance; and as, moreover, it is one of the few details which appear to be manageable here, I think it advisable to dwell upon it for a little.

1. He says that when the Lord speaks of the Pentateuch as written by Moses, He must mean only *certain parts* of it; “since even the most

devout Christians will admit that the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which records the death of Moses, could not have been written by his hand, and the most orthodox commentators are obliged also to concede the probability of some other interpolations having been made in the original story. It would become, even thus, a question for a reverent criticism to determine what passages give signs of not having been written by Moses."

But it is plain that, to far the greater part of the difficulty this does not apply at all; and that of the very small part to which it does apply, it offers a most unsatisfactory solution. Suppose it were admitted to be satisfactory up to the point at which the operations of *a reverent criticism* begin, we ought not to allow ourselves to lose sight of the way in which they end. We have seen that they end, as the Bishop of Natal believes and maintains, in establishing that Moses is just as little the author of the rest of the Pentateuch as of the chapter which contains an account of his death. And when this is the case, surely it must be felt that the solution which is offered of the difficulty is plainly illusory. Supposing it to be admitted, not only that the last chapter of Deuteronomy is an addition by another hand, but that every passage which any orthodox commentator has ever conceded to be *probably* an interpolation was *really* an interpolation, still the great mass of the work remains; and if *it* had Moses for its author, it is very conceiv-

able that the Lord might have spoken of the whole as written by him, disregarding those smaller portions which were not really his. This is only what is done continually in similar cases. Those critics, for example, who are convinced that there are interpolations both in the Gospel of St. John and in his First Epistle, speak of both as his, just as unhesitatingly as those who believe the whole of both to be genuine. So much, therefore, may be admitted, as it seems, without derogating from the Divine knowledge of the Blessed Lord, or impeaching in any way His veracity. But can we say the same, if it be proved that neither the last chapter in Deuteronomy, nor the passages through the Pentateuch which are alleged to be interpolations, nor the remainder of the work, had or could have had Moses for their author? Can we hold that the Lord did not know this, and yet believe Him to be truly a Teacher sent by God? Or can we suppose that, knowing this—knowing that Moses was not the author of any part of the Pentateuch—He still spoke of him as its author,—can we suppose this, I say, without any impeachment of His veracity?

2. But, it is said that “in making use of such expressions our Lord did but accommodate His words to the current popular language of the day.” And, in confirmation of this account of the matter, instances are given, in some of which He seems to

have done so. These certainly would be sufficient,—rather, indeed, examples would be scarcely necessary,—if there were no more in the thing to be accounted for than is contained in the general statement, that the Lord used the popular title of certain writings, though they were not really written by the author to whom it ascribed them. It would be easy to believe, for example, that the Lord used a title which was generally, though erroneously, received, without correcting it, if the error consisted in ascribing to one uninspired author that which was really the work of another, or to one inspired author that which was really written by another, no less inspired. This, I say, might easily be believed, because the popular error in such a case, might involve no practical consequences, and it might, therefore, be of no importance to correct it. But no one can think this applies to the particular case. When the Lord testifies, as He does in a variety of ways, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, the fact to which He bears testimony is not one of an unimportant character, as the authorship of a work might often be. No testimony to its truth and its authority could have more strongly commended it to the belief and reverence of his countrymen, as true and authoritative. And this being the case, can it be supposed that if it were not the work of Moses, He would have declared that it was? Would such testimony be reconcilable with any consistent conception of the Lord as a Divine teacher?

I cannot think that it would, even if the case ended here. But you know **that** this is but a part of it. For the way in which the Bishop of Natal proves that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch is, by showing that it contains irreconcilable inconsistencies, and natural and moral impossibilities, which enter into the substance of the work, so as to be inseparable from it, and to prove that it cannot be historically true, and that it could not have been written by Moses, or by any honest contemporary of the Exodus; and moreover, that it ascribes to God Himself words and acts, precepts and commands, which are wholly at variance with any right views of His character, and which are instinctively condemned by the moral nature that He has given us. And you know, on the other hand, that the Lord not only testifies that it was written by Moses, but that He refers to it as conclusive authority for facts, and for doctrines, and for prophecies; that He refers to it as true, and authoritative, and inspired,—as part of the infallible Scriptures—part of the Scripture which, as He Himself declares, *cannot be broken*. Can one who believes in the truth of the conclusions at which Bishop Colenso has arrived with respect to the Pentateuch,—and more particularly taking into consideration the process by which he has arrived at them,—reconcile the Lord's testimony concerning the Pentateuch to any consistent view of His authority as a Divine teacher?

3. It is maintained that he may, for we may suppose the Blessed Lord to have been ignorant of what modern criticism has discovered in sacred literature, without derogating from the authority due to Him, any more than if we suppose that He was ignorant of the discoveries of modern criticism in profane literature. But upon this point it will be more satisfactory to state exactly what the Bishop of Natal says than to attempt to give any abstract of it.

He says, "It is perfectly consistent with the most entire and sincere belief in our Lord's Divinity, to hold, as many do, that when He vouchsafed to become a 'Son of Man,' He took our nature fully, and voluntarily entered into all the conditions of humanity, and, among others, into that which makes our growth in knowledge *gradual* and limited. We are expressly told, in Luke ii. 52, that 'Jesus increased in wisdom' as well as in 'stature.' It is not supposed that in His human nature He was acquainted, more than any educated Jew of the age, with the mysteries of all modern sciences; nor with St. Luke's expressions before us, can it be seriously maintained that, as an *infant* or *young child*, He possessed a knowledge surpassing that of the most pious and learned adults of His nation, upon the subject of the authorship and age of the different portions of the Pentateuch. At what period, then, of His life upon earth, is it to be supposed that He had granted to Him, as the

Son of Man, *supernaturally*, full and accurate information on these points, so that He should be expected to speak about the Pentateuch in other terms than any other devout Jew of that day would have employed? Why should it be thought that He would speak with certain Divine knowledge, more than upon other matters of ordinary science or history?"

I have given all that is said upon this point, that you may have distinctly in mind what it is that is to be answered. Because while I am very anxious to say all that is necessary in answer to it, I am almost equally anxious not to say more. For if there be any subjects upon which we should speak with caution and reverence—upon which our words ought to be *wary and few*—I am very sure that the union of the Divine and human natures in the person of our Blessed Lord is one of them. No one can have ever engaged in the consideration of the subject, without being made soon to feel that it is indeed a great mystery. But a mystery may be, in its whole length and breadth, and height and depth, entirely unfathomable and incomprehensible to us, and yet we may know enough about it to be certain that some propositions concerning it are true and some false. And this is, I think, our position in relation to this great mystery. It is to Scripture, however, not to reason, that we must look for the knowledge which will enable us either to affirm or to deny with any degree of confidence

in the case. I believe, indeed, that the longer and the more deeply that it is considered independently of Scripture, the deeper and the more hopelessly inscrutable will the mystery appear. All that is perplexing in the first view of the questions which first suggest themselves increases rather than diminishes as we go on; and other questions arise for which it is equally hard to find a satisfactory solution; so that modest minds must be thoroughly convinced that their safest and wisest course is to return to Scripture, and to rest satisfied with the information which it gives on this mysterious subject, scanty as it is. Or at least, if we venture at all upon inference or speculation, we shall feel that all the results at which we arrive must be brought to the test of the written Word, to be verified, modified, or rejected altogether, according to its testimony.

We learn in Scripture, then, that to effect man's redemption, the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, the Word, who *was in the beginning with God*, and who was God—*God over all, blessed for ever*, entered into a new relation to the Father, and, instead of being His Fellow, became His Messenger and His Servant; that, in coming into this condition, He condescended to take our frail and imperfect nature into personal union with Himself; that this union took place in the Virgin's womb, so that He was born into the world, as all men since Adam have been, but differing from all others in this, that in Him both natures, the human and the Divine,

were united ; that having submitted to the law of human nature in His birth, He continued subject to the same law to His death, passed through the stages of infancy, childhood, and youth, before He reached mature manhood ; and that this applied to the whole of the human nature which He had taken to Himself, both the mental and corporeal constituents of it. As His body grew visibly like the bodies of other human beings, so His mind advanced too ; *He increased*, we are told, *in wisdom and in stature*. And as all this—everything connected with His humiliation—was not a show, but a reality, we must be sure that, as regards knowledge, His mind followed the ordinary law of the development of human minds, so that He knew more at a later stage of His life than at an earlier, which is the same thing as to say, that He was ignorant of some things at an earlier stage of His life which He knew at a later.

So far there seems to be no ground for differing from the Bishop of Natal ; and though I think what he says of the Lord's knowledge in early youth, as compared with that of pious and learned adults of His nation, is rash and unadvised,¹ I need not

¹ Though it is, as I have remarked above, of little importance to the question immediately before us, yet it seems, upon other grounds, right to say that we can hardly, without presumption, assert positively that, even as a young child, the Lord did not possess knowledge surpassing that of the most pious and learned adults of His own nation. At least I think we shall feel that we ought to be cautious in making any such assertion, when we remember that the same Evangelist who tells us, as the Bishop of Natal reminds us, that the Lord *increased*

dwell upon it, as the question is not with reference to His knowledge at any earlier stage of His life on earth, but with reference to His knowledge in the full maturity of His manhood, and the full exercise of His office as a teacher. And that too, be it also remembered, not with reference to His knowledge, even then, of the *mysteries of science*, ancient or modern, but His knowledge of those things upon which He spoke and taught.

Bearing this in mind, you can hardly be in any way embarrassed by the question which the Bishop of Natal proposes, with such manifest confidence that it offers insuperable difficulties to those who rely upon the Lord's testimony to the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch. Supposing, as he thinks we must suppose, that in early youth He had no greater knowledge upon the subject of the authorship and age of the different portions of the Pentateuch than pious and learned adults of His nation, he asks, When did He obtain this larger measure of knowledge?—"At what period, then, of His life upon earth, is it to be supposed that He had granted to Him, *supernaturally*, full and accurate information on these points, so that He should be expected to speak about the Penta-

in wisdom and in stature, tells us also that, at twelve years of age, He sat *in the midst of the doctors at Jerusalem, both hearing them and asking them questions*, and, as it appears, also answering the questions which they put to Him. And that even then, His Divine wisdom shone forth so brightly, that "all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."

teach in other terms than any other devout Jew of that day would have employed? why should it be thought that He would speak with certain *Divine* knowledge on this matter, more than upon other matters of ordinary science and history?"

In answer to this question, I have no difficulty in acknowledging, that I cannot pretend to fix accurately the time of the Lord's life at which He acquired such information as would enable Him to speak with fuller and more perfect knowledge upon all the subjects on which He taught, than any of His countrymen, however pious or learned; and with a perfect freedom from the errors into which all other Jews might have fallen, had they spoken of them. But though I cannot fix the point at which He became possessed of this knowledge, I can, with great confidence, fix the point beyond which He could not have been without it. Whenever and however He obtained it, I can be very sure that when He entered upon the office of a teacher, He actually possessed it. To suppose that He entered upon His office as *a teacher sent from God*, deficient in any knowledge which was necessary to secure Him from error upon any of the subjects upon which He was to teach, would be opposed to all that Scripture sets forth with respect to His absolute authority as a Divine Teacher, and irreconcilable with the assumption of absolute and independent authority as a teacher, which was the characteristic of His public teaching from the

first, and which, we are told, attracted the special attention of His countrymen, and filled them with wonder, as altogether different from the manner of teaching to which they had been accustomed in the public teachers of their nation.¹

And this applies also to all that is urged, in addition, in another part of the work, concerning the limits of His knowledge, with a view to confirm or defend the positions which I have been examining.² This consists, chiefly, of the remarks of ancient and

¹ The Sermon on the Mount contains many examples of His style of resting His teaching upon His own authority, not merely in independence of former teachers, but in opposition to them: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time But I say unto you" And at the end, St. Matthew tells us the impression which his *doctrine* or manner of teaching made upon His hearers. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Mat. vii. 28, 29. And Lightfoot's *Exercitation* on the latter of these verses, contains a very interesting explanation of the reasons why the people heard the Lord's *doctrine* with so much surprise. "It is said with good reason in the verse going before, that 'the multitude were astonished at Christ's doctrine;' for, besides his Divine truth, depth, and convincing power, they had not heard any before discoursing with that *αὐθεντία*, 'authority,' that he did. The scribes borrowed credit to their doctrines from traditions, and the fathers of them: and no sermon of any scribe had any authority or value without *הנו רבנין* 'The Rabbins have a tradition,'—or *הנמים אימרים* 'The wise men say;—or some traditional oracle of that nature. Hillel the Great taught truly, and as the tradition was, concerning a certain thing. 'But although he discoursed of that matter all day long, *לא קבלי ממנו* they received not his doctrine, until he said at last, So I heard from Shemaia and Abtalion.' Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 33. 1." *Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations* in loc. See also *Harmony* Pt. iii. Sect. xx. on Mark i. 22.

² Part iii. preface, pp. xxxii—xl. A Letter from a Clergyman to the Bishop of Natal.

modern commentators upon Mark xiii. 32.¹ The text is a very remarkable and a very important one, and I hope that I have no disposition to detract from its full force. It contains a very explicit statement made by the Blessed Lord concerning Himself. Of its natural and proper meaning there can be no doubt. And I should feel that there was just as much presumption, and presumption of the same kind too, in doing violence to the Lord's words for the purpose of softening or narrowing their proper meaning, as if the violence were committed for the purpose of extending it.

I therefore say without doubt or hesitation—what I certainly should not venture to say or think, if I did not find it in Holy Scripture—that there was one thing of which, in the full maturity of His powers, and the full exercise of them as a Divine teacher, the Blessed Lord in the flesh was ignorant. But how very far is this text, thus interpreted, from warranting or justifying the statements of Bishop Colenso, which it is put forward to defend! I find it difficult, indeed, to conceive how the two things are supposed to be connected. I presume, however, that the process must be something of this kind:—If there be one thing of which the Lord in the flesh was certainly ignorant, is it not reasonable to infer that there were other things also of which He was ignorant? And why may not this fact of the

¹ See Note A, at the end.

authorship of the Pentateuch have been amongst the number? Can any good reason be given why the Day of Judgment should be concealed from Him, and the authorship of the Pentateuch revealed to Him?

In reply to this, I should say for myself, that I feel the subject to be too far above me to allow me to extend, by inference or reasoning, the information which is given to me upon it by the Blessed Lord Himself. I am sure that what He says is true. And while it makes it certain that there was one thing which He did not know, it makes it possible that there were other things also which He did not know. But it gives no direct warrant to assert that this was actually the case; and without such a warrant, I will not venture to assert that it was. I feel that it is a case—if there be any—which calls for the modest resolution of the wise and good Bishop Ridley with reference to another great mystery—*not to dare to speak farther, yea, almost none other, than the text itself doth, as it were, lead us by the hand.*

This is my decision as regards myself. But there are many to whom this may seem unreasonable timidity. Let it be supposed then, for argument's sake, that we are at liberty to infer that there were some other things, or even many other things of which the Lord was ignorant, and how very far is even this from warranting or justifying all that the Bishop of Natal maintains!

For what he asserts is not that there were some things which the Lord did not know, and upon which, if He had spoken and taught, He would have been liable to speak and to teach erroneously; it is this, that one of the subjects upon which He spoke and taught was among the things that He did not know, and that, accordingly, upon it He actually did speak and teach erroneously!

Now, I do not forget that I consented to argue this point, or the supposition that we had a right to conclude that the Lord was ignorant of some things beside that one of which He Himself declares that He was ignorant. I do not want to withdraw this concession here; but without doing so, I may remind you, that as regards the only thing of which we know the Lord to have been ignorant, we know in the same way, that he abstained from teaching upon it. And if we are to go beyond what He Himself expressly declares of His ignorance, and to believe that it extended to other things also, ought we not to be sure, that, however far it extended, it would to the same extent have limited His teaching? Indeed it would appear impossible to doubt this, even independently of the fact which so strikingly confirms it. For if we may suppose, without derogating from His qualifications or His authority as a Divine teacher, that His knowledge was limited, and that some things lay beyond it, could we—without utterly destroying His authority as a Divine teacher—

could we believe, either that He was ignorant of the limits of His own knowledge, or that, knowing them, He taught beyond them? Either position sounds too monstrous to be seriously maintained. And yet this is, in substance, though not in terms—the alternative which is presented by what the Bishop of Natal maintains.

Indeed, the particular case in which he is concerned goes far beyond anything that any such general statement as I have made could convey. For the book on which the Lord sets the stamp of His authority as the work of Moses, as historically true, as authority for doctrine, as a portion of Scripture, not only was not written by Moses, but it is so far from being historically true or inspired, that it relates what did not, and could not, have happened; and moreover puts forward as having come from God commands and precepts which did not come from Him, and which could not have come from Him, as they are at variance with the fundamental principles of morality and all the better feelings which He has implanted in our breasts. Now if we believe this, what vestige of authority does it leave to the Lord as a teacher? and if we take away His authority, what foundation is left for Christianity? If He Himself taught what was false in fact and erroneous in morals, could we trust in Him as a teacher and guide? And whatever difference it might make as to our estimate of His moral character, would He be in

any degree more trustworthy, as a teacher and guide, if, instead of teaching thus Himself, He bore testimony to the truth and Divine inspiration of a book which taught what was false in fact and erroneous in morals? Can we believe this with regard to our Blessed Lord, and believe what Holy Scripture declares concerning Him, and what it records as declared by Him concerning Himself, and as declared by God concerning Him—that *He was sent by God—sanctified and sent into the world; that He came into the world that He might bear witness unto the truth; that He is the faithful and true witness*, called Faithful and True; yea, that He is the Truth; that God's seal was set to His teaching by the power which He received to work miracles, and even by a voice from Heaven, declaring Him to be the beloved Son of God, and commanding His disciples to hear Him? It is plainly impossible to reconcile the two things. If we will hold by the testimony of Scripture to the Divine mission and authority of the Blessed Lord (I say no more here), then we must refuse to receive the positions with reference to the Pentateuch which the Bishop of Natal maintains. And, on the other hand, if we hold by these positions, we must give up the Lord's claims to the character of a teacher sent by the Father and taught by the Father, and to all whose teaching the Father has set His seal as true.

And for many persons this will be enough. There

are not a few who would be less startled than they ought to be at the conclusion to which the Bishop of Natal has arrived, so long as they understood it as affecting the authority of Moses only, who will feel it to be absolutely impossible to receive it, when they see how, and to what an extent, it affects the authority of Christ,—when they see that, if they believe this conclusion, they must be prepared to believe not only that the Lord was ignorant of some things, but that upon one of the things of which He was ignorant, He spoke and taught—that how many more of the subjects on which He spoke and taught lay beyond the limits of His knowledge, no one can tell: and that no one, therefore, can tell how much of His teaching is doubtful and how much false; but that this is certain, that upon one subject of which He was ignorant, He did speak and teach erroneously; and, moreover, that this was not a subject with regard to which it was of light importance that He should have taught erroneously, but that, on the contrary, he thereby through the Book on which He set the stamp of His authority, virtually taught what was false in fact and false in morals. When it is once seen clearly that the Bishop of Natal's conclusion with regard to the Pentateuch draws after it such consequences, there are very many who will feel that they cannot possibly believe it. They may not be able to detect and expose the fallacies in the proofs which he offers of it, but they will be as thoroughly con-

vinced as if they could do this, that these proofs must be fallacious, since they lead to what they feel, and believe, and know to be false.

There are many who will feel that in this disclosure, limited as it is, of the further results to which the Bishop of Natal's reasoning leads, they have a providential safeguard from being misled by it. And for very many this would be the safest, and therefore the wisest, mode of dealing with this elaborate attempt to overthrow the authority of Holy Scripture.

But there are some who would not be, and some perhaps, who could not be, satisfied with so compendious a mode of terminating this controversy ; who, though they had no doubt that what has been said amounts to a proof that the conclusion at which the Bishop of Natal has arrived is erroneous, yet would not feel satisfied with any refutation of his argument which did not enter into its details so as to show not only that the conclusion to which it has led is false, but also where and how the reasoning is itself wrong. And there can be no doubt that the cause of Scripture would stand at a great disadvantage, particularly at the present day, if, while it was assailed by facts and arguments, some of which wore a plausible air, and which the assailant was loudly proclaiming to be unanswerable, the defenders of the truth confined themselves to pointing out the dangerous or destructive consequences which

were involved in the conclusion to which these facts and arguments were said to lead.

But I need not tell you that the cause of truth stands at no such disadvantage. All of you know that many detailed Replies to this "Critical Examination of the Pentateuch,"—that is, to the two first parts of the work—have been published. And there are some of you who, I know, do not need any information with respect to the character of these Replies, as you are acquainted with the most important of them. But for the sake of those who have not the same acquaintance with them, I may say that they do not leave an alleged fact to which any importance can be attached, or a point of criticism, or an argument, or an inference, unexamined. This assault upon the Word of God has drawn forth defenders from very different classes in society. The clerical body has, of course, supplied the greatest number,—not only the portion of the body who are enjoying lettered ease in the Universities, but the portion also who are engaged in the active work of the ministry as parochial clergymen. But the laity have not been wanting in the support of a cause in which they are no less interested than the clergy. A class of the laity, indeed, to which we should hardly have looked for aid in such a controversy, has furnished an important contribution to the defence of the truth; one of the Replies—and one exhibiting considerable ability and a large share of the kind of learning which was most called

for in the case—having been the joint work of two mechanics.

The Replies have been very numerous, and, of course, of different degrees of merit, some being more learned and able than others ; but I have not happened to see any of them which did not exhibit considerable ability and a competent share of learning. And I think that they furnish, on the whole, a satisfactory answer to this formidable attack upon Revelation. For formidable, I think it must be regarded, even independently of the position of the author, in which, nevertheless, not a little of the power of the work for evil lies. For, though points of attack are sought for by him in a painfully hostile spirit, and pressed to the utmost, when they are supposed to be found, yet, as it is the work of a Bishop, some will regard, and many more will affect to regard, all that is said against the authority of Scripture as admissions wrung by the force of truth from a friend, made reluctantly, and anxiously softened, as far as possible, in stating them. And the objections which he has put forward are certain, in this way to be received more easily, and to pass for a great deal more, than if they came from a different source. No doubt the work has done a good deal to unsettle and to destroy the belief in the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, which lies at the foundation of our religion. And it is to be feared that its powers of doing mischief are not yet exhausted. But we cannot doubt that they are very

greatly weakened. It seems impossible, indeed, that it should be otherwise. Under the searching examination to which it has been subjected, impossibilities which were confidently relied upon have disappeared ; inconsistencies, on which scarcely less was made to rest, have been reconciled. Other objections and difficulties have been disposed of with the same success, and shown to rest upon misstatements, miscalculations, false reasoning, and unsound criticism. So that, however calculated this work may be to perplex and stagger ordinary readers, if left to deal with it for themselves, we may be satisfied, I think, that the Replies to it provide abundant means for re-assuring and quieting their minds, and re-establishing their faith. And we have every reason already to regard this last assault upon Holy Scripture as having performed, in some measure, the good office, which, under God's providential guardianship of His Word, all preceding attacks upon it have been made to render—that is, the office of confirming its authority by the conclusive Replies which they have drawn forth in its defence.

But if their object had been to convince the Bishop of Natal of his errors, the Replies to his work must be regarded, I fear, for the present at least, as a total failure. I do not think, however, that this ought to be taken as any proof of their weakness. I should be sorry to speak, either disparagingly or unkindly of the Bishop of Natal. No

one can read his work, even if previously unacquainted with anything else that he has written, without feeling that he is a man of considerable ability, who has read and thought a great deal upon the subject on which he writes, and who entertains a very firm conviction of the truth, and the importance of the conclusions at which he has arrived. But though, in popular estimation, the strength of a man's convictions is conclusive proof of his honesty, yet, in sounder judgment, it cannot be received as such, independently of all consideration of the way in which they have been formed. And no one can read the revision of some of the Bishop's conclusions in the answers referred to, without being satisfied that he is chargeable with a degree of rashness, which it would be hard to excuse, even if the matter were of less momentous importance. He seems to have taken up an unfavourable impression of the authenticity of the Pentateuch very hastily, and to have soon examined it, rather to confirm, than to correct, or fairly to test, this impression.

In fact, if he had not consulted Scripture in this one-sided way, he could hardly have overlooked passages which must either have altered some of his views, or, at least, have raised such doubts about them as would have restrained him from putting them publicly forward. And this tendency to look but in one direction seems to have gone on increasing, the further that he has

advanced in the unhappy course to which he has committed himself. This is natural, and almost unavoidable. As a man pursues, even in solitude, a course of inquiry, in which he has formed theories, thinks that he has made discoveries, and hopes to make more, his personal feelings become enlisted on the side of his theories and his discoveries, so that evidence in their support is received much more readily than evidence against them. And this state of feeling is, of course, aggravated by controversy—particularly if the controversy be one in which he himself and his discoveries meet with some rough usage; as must be the case when it is one, in which his opponents feel that they are contending for something which is infinitely more valuable than their lives. Other feelings are then added to parental partiality for his offspring. He feels that he has to do with prejudiced, unfair, and heated men: and every thing that comes from them is thenceforward only examined to see how it may be refuted and set aside: it is undoubtedly wrong.

Whether this be the process which has conducted the Bishop of Natal to it or not, this seems to be the actual state of his feelings as regards his opponents. For himself, he has a great work to perform in regenerating the mind of his Church and his country. His mission is to emancipate his brethren from the thralldom of antiquated prejudices, and to relieve religion itself from the load

of anile traditions which deform it, and weigh it down, and impede its progress! In this great enterprise he has perilled everything, and he is resolved not to be turned back from it. In this state of mind, no objection to any of his arguments is of sufficient force to raise any doubts in his mind of its soundness; or if there be one which is absolutely irresistible, it only affects something in his reasoning which is of no real importance, and the point which the argument was intended to establish is just as good as before. Thus he seems impregnable to argument, and so inaccessible to conviction that the many able Replies which his work has drawn forth, so far as he is concerned, seem to have been written in vain.

I hope it may not be always so, even as regards him; and for others, I trust that already these works have done a great deal to answer their purpose, and that they will go on to do much more. I have no doubt, indeed, that they have been effectual, and that they will be still more extensively effectual, in strengthening those who, without such aid, would hardly have been able to resist this violent assault upon their faith. There were many who read a good deal, at least, of the Bishop's work, and who could enter into it and understand it quite sufficiently to be disturbed and perplexed by what they read, who, from want of leisure, want of learning, want of reasoning powers, or want of the habit of exercising them, could not

have made out for themselves a satisfactory solution of the difficulties which it raises : and such persons are supplied with what they need in one or other of the Replies to it.

There are few, indeed, of those who enter into the details of this controversy, who are above receiving such help in some part or other of it. I am aware, as I said, that some of you have already availed yourselves of the help which the works referred to supply ; and I cannot doubt that many more will find it expedient to have recourse to it as time goes on ; for, from the tendencies of thought and feeling at the present day, this controversy is not likely to die out speedily, but, on the contrary, if the interest about this book were to subside, the same arguments are likely or certain to be put forward in some new form. I think, however, that if you are enabled to answer, to your own full satisfaction, some of the leading points in Bishop Colenso's work, you are not likely to be disturbed by anything in the same line which may hereafter appear. And this satisfaction, I am sure, the Replies are capable of affording. But, in using them, I think you may be served by a hint or two, in the way of caution and direction.

1. In the first place, then, do not be startled or perplexed when you find, as you will find in these works, different solutions of the same difficulty—even solutions which so exclude each other,

that if one be right, the other must be wrong. Such a diversity of solutions cannot fairly be taken as lending any support to the Bishop of Natal's conclusion against the truth and inspiration of the Pentateuch; for such diversity would exist if his conclusion were false, and the Pentateuch true and inspired. The truth and the inspiration of the Pentateuch would not prevent the existence of difficulties connected with the book; nor would the same fact, that it is true and inspired, obliterate or soften the natural differences which exist between different minds, and which lead them to take different views upon almost every question that is proposed to them. Such differences will operate, when any difficulty connected with the Pentateuch is proposed, and operate in the same way, and to the same extent, whether the Pentateuch is inspired or not. The mode of accounting for the difficulty which satisfies one of two individuals may not occur at all to the other; and, if proposed to him, may be rejected as unsatisfactory: while the solution with which the latter is fully satisfied may, in like manner, fail to satisfy the former. There is nothing in this but what might happen—nay, we may say, nothing but what certainly would happen—if the Pentateuch were true and inspired, no less than if it were uninspired and false. And therefore, when it does actually happen, we have no reason whatever to conclude against the truth and inspiration of the Pentateuch.

And it requires only a little extension of this remark to show that the fact, that there are different or conflicting solutions of a difficulty, gives us no reason to conclude that the true solution of the difficulty is not among them. Because, if the true solution were discovered by any one, it does not follow that it would command the assent of all to whom it was proposed; and those who did not receive it would not be restrained from devising other solutions for themselves. You ought, therefore, to consider each solution as if no other were proposed; and, if you find one which, upon the best consideration that you are capable of giving to it, satisfies you fully, your confidence in it as the true solution need not and ought not to be disturbed, because there are others, each of which appears the true one to some one else; for this is only what might and would be the case, supposing the one that you have selected to be really the true one.

2. But if it should happen, as it may, that, of some of the difficulties put forward by the Bishop of Natal, you cannot find, in any of the answers to his work which have been published, what you regard as a perfectly satisfactory solution, you ought not to be discouraged or shaken in your faith in the truth and the inspiration of the Pentateuch. For it requires but a very little consideration of the question to see, that we have no good reason to expect that every difficulty which

has been or may be raised shall be so solved as to leave no doubt of the sufficiency of the solution. We have no more reason for expecting that all difficulties connected with the Inspired Volume should be removed, than we should have for expecting that none should exist. One cannot think for a moment upon the subject without seeing manifold reasons why one who reads the Bible at the present day, even in a fair and humble spirit, must encounter some difficulties in it ; and why a reader of a different character, one who looks for difficulties there, must find them in abundance. When it is said that this must be the case, I need hardly say that I mean that, in the natural course of cause and effect, it could not be otherwise. No one can doubt that God could have ordered it otherwise if He pleased, and that He could have made every part of His Word just as plain as some parts of it are. But when we see that this has not been His will—that He has not seen fit to interfere with the natural effects of time and change, and other causes of obscurity and difficulty—we must be sure that the difficulties which He has permitted to exist in His Word serve to promote some useful end or ends. We should be sure of this, I say, even if we could see nothing of their mode of operation. But we can see that they are fitted to exercise our industry, our patience, our faith, and our humility ; and we cannot doubt that they may serve many useful ends that we are unable to discover. But the

very same reasons that there are for suffering many difficulties to exist, may render it right that after all is done that we can do to remove them, some should be allowed to remain.

If we see some, therefore, which resist all efforts to solve them, they ought not to form a stumbling-block to us. But, on the other hand, when we see that what seemed to be as formidable difficulties as any other are actually removed, ought it not to make us feel that it would be rash to conclude that others are well founded, because they have hitherto resisted all efforts to remove them?

It would be well, I think, if the Bishop of Natal had remembered this; and it is very important that you should remember it in reading his work and the answers to it. You will find that some difficulties on which he relies as much as any other have been most satisfactorily met and solved. And if you come by-and-by upon some other difficulty for which you can neither provide yourself, nor find in these answers, a perfectly satisfactory solution, is it not reasonable—I mean when the reasons for belief are so many and so strong—to set aside this reason for unbelief with the reflection, that the difficulty in question is not weightier than others appeared to be; and that as they were solved, so may it be hereafter? At all events, as we now see that they really admitted of a satisfactory solution, all the while that they resisted all attempts to

solve them, would it not be unreasonable to conclude that this is in its nature incapable of being solved, even if God should not see fit to allow it to be solved in our time, or solved at all in time?

3. This is all, I believe, that it is absolutely necessary to say. But I think it right to add that, if I were satisfied that a particular difficulty admitted of no natural solution—that something recorded in the history, for example, could not have happened in the course of nature, that it was, under the circumstances, a physical impossibility, so that the alternative lay between disbelieving the history or believing that a miracle was wrought in the case, I should have no hesitation in choosing the latter. It was a time of signs and wonders. And though, even at such a time, we have good reason to believe that a miracle would not have been wrought unnecessarily; yet, on the other hand, we cannot doubt that whenever a miracle was really necessary, a miracle was actually wrought. And then, believing the rest of the history, natural and supernatural, shall I disbelieve this part of it, because, in order to render it credible, it is necessary to suppose that a miracle was really wrought? It does not appear to me that this would be a reasonable mode of dealing with the case.

It may be said, it is true, that the miraculous part of the history is kept distinct from the natural; and that, whenever God works not by natural forces

and by human agents, each acting according to established laws, but by an exercise of power above Nature, and controlling or contravening her laws, we are distinctly informed that the event is so brought about. And that, this being the course and nature of the history, when it neither states nor intimates that there was any miraculous agency exercised, we seem to be restrained from supposing that there was.

I have no disposition to question the truth of this, regarded as a statement of the general character of the history ; or to question the reasonableness of the inference from it, if it be understood, in the same way to be of a general nature, —a caution against resorting lightly, or without grave reason, to such a solution of a difficulty. But if it be urged so far as to shut us out from such a solution altogether, we must look again at the statement of the nature of the history upon which the rule is founded, to see whether it holds so universally as to warrant us in drawing from it so strict and absolute a rule. And I think we shall find that it does not.

In the recapitulation of God's dealings with His people which is made by Moses by His command, Deut. xxix. 5, 6, he makes the following statement in God's name: "And I have led you forty years in the wilderness, your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy feet ; ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye

drunk wine or strong drink, that ye might know that I am the LORD your God."

Here we are informed that, for the forty years of their journey through the wilderness, the natural decay of their raiment was miraculously arrested, so that in all that long time neither their clothes nor their shoes waxed old upon them.

This is a clear and great miracle. It is, we see, classed by God Himself with the miraculous supply of food from Heaven, by which He vouchsafed to support His people, day by day, during the same period. And yet of this great miracle there is no record or intimation in the four preceding books of the Pentateuch, in which the history of the people's journeying through the wilderness is contained. A man would read the whole history, without knowing or suspecting that any such miracle was going on all the while. Yet it was not for that a jot the less real, or the less wonderful. And we finally learn the fact of it in this supplemental book of the work; and even there, not in the historical part, but by an incidental reference to it in an address of the Man of God to His people which is recorded there. Does not this show that there may have been miraculous agencies in exercise, every day for those forty years, of which no mention is made in the history of the period? And this being the case, if in the course of that history we come upon an occurrence which must have been miraculous, or else it could not have

taken place at all; and that thus the history must be false in the place, or a miracle must have been wrought, can we be regarded as unreasonable if we say, We believe upon good grounds, as we think, that the Pentateuch is a portion of the Inspired Volume; and rather than reject this part of it as false, we will believe that a miracle was actually wrought in the case referred to, though there is in the history no more mention or intimation that any miraculous agency was exercised at the time, than there is that a miraculous agency was exercised to suspend the natural course of decay in the shoes and clothes of God's people which yet we know was really exercised for the whole forty years of their wanderings?

These observations might perhaps be extended with advantage, but I must remember that time is running on, and that I can dwell no longer on this division of my Charge, without depriving myself of the power of saying anything upon the part that remains.

I have given but a very imperfect notice of a very extensive subject. And I must be content to glance in the same way, or even more cursorily, at what was to form the matter of the second part of my Charge,—the unfavourable events in the *external* history of the Church which have occurred in the same time. Everything of a public character

affecting the Church disadvantageously, through any of its external relations, would come under this head. And the union of our Church with the State is so intimate, and its special relation to the head of the State invests the Crown with so much Ecclesiastical authority, and so much and such important Ecclesiastical patronage,—both to be exercised by the Government of the day,—that it will be easily understood that one who was writing a history of our Church upon the supposed plan would from time to time have to record under this head, sometimes with regret, and sometimes with fear, and sometimes with grave disapprobation, acts of the Legislature and acts of the Government. But though it would be the duty of an Ecclesiastical historian to notice all events which are calculated to exercise any influence upon the interests of the Church, the duty of a Bishop, speaking on such an occasion as the present, is by no means so wide. A Bishop's Charge is not supposed or expected to speak of all the public events—I mean of course of all the public events in which the Church is concerned—which have occurred in the interval between his Visitations, but only of such of them as it is necessary or useful to bring before his Clergy, as connected with duties which ought to be explained to them or pressed upon them. I do not mean that there are no other public events to which it is allowable, or to which it may be expedient, to refer in a Charge, but that, speaking generally, it is the

Bishop's duty to refer to such occurrences, and that this, speaking generally, cannot be said of others.

And looking at them in this way, there is plainly a great difference between the two classes of public events to which I have referred. For the acts of the Legislature not only often affect the interests of the Church, but often impose duties upon the Clergy, and often too upon those who are committed to their charge. So that, both for their own sake and for the sake of those whom they have to inform, and instruct, and counsel, it may be very necessary to direct their attention to such acts, to explain their bearing, and to point out the various duties, whether of the clergy themselves or of the laity, which grow out of them. But there is not the same reason for referring to what Government may have done in the interval, administering the rights of the Crown in its relation to the Church. And there can scarcely ever be the same reason, or any sufficient reason for referring to what it has done in the exercise of a very important part of these rights,—the Ecclesiastical patronage of the Crown. Such acts of the Government may, no doubt, exercise just as important influences as any acts of the Legislature can upon the well-being, and the credit, and the principles of the Church, and so upon its highest interests. They are not, however, connected with the duties of the Clergy, whom the Bishop has to address, or of their flocks. He is not called upon in the same way, therefore,

or in any way of duty, as it seems, to draw the attention of his Clergy to them ; and as it is not a matter of duty to review them, it is obvious that there may be strong reasons to make such a review inexpedient ; especially with regard to acts which belong to the head upon which we have been speaking—acts calculated to exercise an unfavourable influence upon the Church.

I do not know, however, that there is the same reason for refraining from referring to what has been done in the exercise of other parts of the Ecclesiastical prerogative of the Crown : and at all events there is not the same reason for keeping silence upon what has not been done. And there may be this strong reason for speaking of it, namely, that the Clergy may be able to do something either to promote or to prevent such an exercise of the Royal prerogative. Whenever any such effect is within the range of the legitimate powers of the Clergy, it is so connected with their duties as to be a proper subject of an Episcopal Charge. And it happens that there is actually a case of this kind, falling within the time that I am reviewing, to which I think it is desirable briefly to advert.

After a long period of inaction, the English Convocations have been for some time restored to a limited exercise of their functions. They recovered the privilege of speaking before they were given any power of acting. But this power, too, came after a time.

The licence from the Crown which is necessary to warrant any Synodical action was procured,—with a limitation, of course, to certain specified objects—first, for the Province of Canterbury, and then for the Province of York. How far this change is likely to be beneficial to the Church, and whether (whatever are to be its effects) it had not been rendered necessary by circumstances, are questions of interest and importance in their place. But we have nothing to do with them here. However they ought to be answered, it is equally certain that the proceeding placed the Irish branch of the Church in a most anomalous and disadvantageous position. We stood in some degree at a disadvantage, from the time that debates had been revived in the Convocations, even though they led to no action. For our English brethren acquired thereby means, which were withheld from us, of influencing the public mind upon questions in which the Church was deeply concerned. But the disadvantage became grievously aggravated, when the right of Synodical action, however limited, was granted to the English and withheld from the Irish Provinces. For if a measure passed by the English Convocations were binding upon the United Church, then we should be governed by Ecclesiastical laws in the passing of which we had no voice. And if to avoid this flagrant injustice, such measures were held as binding in England and not in Ireland, the union of the Churches would be virtually dissolved.

While, on the other hand, if a measure passed by both the English Convocations were inoperative, from our incapacity to perform any Synodical act, until licence from the Crown be given, we should stand in the very painful position of inflicting our disabilities on the English branch of the Church; and, while we had no power to aid in measures for the benefit of the Church, of being all powerful in preventing them. It would be quite true that we held this position by no fault of our own, but the effect would be just the same as if we were voluntary agents in the case.

Such a position would have been very painful to us, and very perplexing and disadvantageous to the whole Church; and we were only spared occupying this painful position by the decided course which the Convocation of York adopted. When a measure agreed upon by the two Houses of Canterbury was brought to them to be considered, they refused to take any action on the question, on the ground that the Irish branch of the Church was not in a position to act synodically. This was no doubt the wisest and most considerate course to take under the circumstances. It did all that could be done to lessen the painfulness of our position, and to bring about the necessity of speedily relieving us from it, though hitherto, unfortunately, it has not been attended with any such result.

I said that we held this position, which was so

little agreeable to ourselves and so inconvenient to others, not through our own fault. And in explanation, I may say that the Bishops, under the Archbishops, have from the first done all that they could to press upon the consideration of Her Majesty's Government the claim of our branch of the Church to the same liberty which the English branch enjoyed; and the application was enforced by pointing out, that withholding from us the licence which had been granted to them, was not merely a slight and wrong to us, but an injury to the whole United Church, which was reduced to inactivity, as regards Synodical action, by the incapacity under which an integral portion of it lay. This incapacity could be at once removed by a Royal licence to meet, and to consider, and decide upon certain specified measures; and it was not easy to understand what reason was supposed to exist for refusing to grant such a licence. It would be very intelligible that it should be thought better for the whole Church, that its Synodical powers should be allowed to remain still in abeyance. It might be said, 'The Church has a well-considered declaration of sound doctrine, with which every one professes to be content; a form of prayer which every one professes to admire and love; we have a body of Ecclesiastical Laws of which no one complains; and Ecclesiastical Courts, whose ability and disposition to administer the law faithfully are not questioned by any one. This

is the patrimony which has been handed down to the Church. She has long preserved it unimpaired without the aid of Convocation. It may be that, in some parts, it would admit of improvement. But who can engage that, if we allow the process of altering it to begin, it will stop just at the right point? When once the current of public feeling runs in the direction of change, it is hard to restrain or direct it : so that, without insisting on any special dangers from errors prevailing at the present time, but merely looking at the risk which is always incident to the work of altering, with a view to amending, an old and extensive system, it would seem safer and wiser to defer entering upon the work, at least until there is some more urgent occasion, and a more general call for it.'—If these reasons had been put forward for refusing to give the necessary authority to the English Convocations to perform any Synodical acts, every one would have understood them, and many would have concurred in them. But when this authority was given to the English Provinces, it seemed hard to conceive any good or plausible reason why it should be withheld from the Irish Provinces : and more especially after it had been found—what, indeed, ought to have been foreseen—that holding back this authority from us renders the concession of it to them unavailing.

The only reason that has been spoken of in such a way as to make it probable that it may have had

some influence with Government is this : it has been said the Irish branch of the Church did not in fact possess a Convocation ; so that with regard to Ireland, it was not, as in England, a question about reviving dormant powers, but about creating a Church Legislature where none had ever existed.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that if this were confidently stated by any one who ought to have any weight in such a case, it should make an impression upon Government, who cannot be reasonably expected to know much of Irish Church History. But it seems strange that any one who could be supposed to have any acquaintance with such matters could be found to make such a statement. Nothing seems to be better ascertained in the history of the Church in this country, than the existence and use, both before and after the Reformation, not only of Provincial Synods, convened by the authority of the several Metropolitans in their respective Provinces, but also of a General Synod of the National Church. This latter body, since the Reformation, has been convened by virtue of Royal Writs, directed to the Archbishops, by whom, in pursuance of the writs, the bishops and other dignitaries, together with the cathedral and parochial clergy in their respective provinces, were summoned to meet on a certain day in Dublin, forming when so assembled one body, which discharged all the functions of a CONVOCATION, and is expressly styled a CONVOCATION both by the Crown and the Legislature.

All this, as I said, was well known to all who were acquainted with Irish Church History. But a doubt having been raised upon the point, it was necessary to satisfy it; and accordingly a full proof of the foregoing statements was given in an able paper, which was presented to Her Majesty's Government by the Primate in March last. It was a question of fact, and it was to be settled of course by an appeal to history. And I do not think that any one who reads the statement, which the paper referred to contains, of the facts in the history of the Church in Ireland that bear upon the question, can doubt that they amount to a conclusive proof of all that we were concerned to prove.

But, in truth, there is evidence of the rights of the Church, in this matter, within every one's reach, which most persons will regard as perfectly satisfactory, in the Royal Confirmation of the Irish Canons of 1634, by Charles I. This document, which corresponds in all manner of respects to the Confirmation of the English Canons of 1604, by King James, begins by stating the circumstances under which the Canons were passed; that, by virtue of Royal writs addressed to the four Archbishops, the bishops, deans, archdeacons, chapters, colleges, and the rest of the clergy in Ireland, were summoned to appear before the said archbishops in the cathedral church of St. Patrick, Dublin, upon a day specified, "then and there to treat and conclude upon certain high and urgent

affairs in the said writs mentioned ;” and that they did thereupon at the time and in the place appointed, “ assemble themselves and appear in CONVOCATION, for that purpose, according to the tenor of the said Writs.” And then it is set forth that unto the said archbishops, &c., then assembled in CONVOCATION, the King, by his Letters Patent under the Great Seal of Ireland, gave and granted full power and authority, “ that they, from time to time, during the Parliament then begun at Dublin, might confer, treat, consult, and conclude, of and upon such Articles, Canons, Orders, Ordinances, Statutes and Constitutions Ecclesiastical, as they shall think necessary, fit, and convenient for the honour and service of Almighty God, and augmentation of His Divine Worship, the rooting out of Heresies and Errors of the Vineyards of Christ ; for the procuring of the good and quiet of the Church, and preservation of good government in Causes Ecclesiastical, and to the jurisdiction of the Church belonging : and also to make and set down Ordinances and Decrees, to have such force and effect as other Canons and Constitutions of the Church have ; and the same (our Royal Assent thereunto being first had and obtained) to set forth freely and lawfully ; and that as well the Archbishops and Bishops, and all other inferior persons whom it may concern, should yield due obedience thereunto, as and by our said Letters Patent at large it doth and may appear.”

Under these powers—which only differ from those given to the Convocation of Canterbury, in 1603, for the same object, in being fuller and ampler—the Irish Canons were prepared and passed, and were then presented to the king with a prayer that they might be ratified. And in accordance with this prayer, the title of the Book is given in full, as it stands in our printed copies;¹ and it is formally ratified, and the duty of enforcing obedience to it is solemnly enjoined upon all who exercise Ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Ireland.

Few will require, for their own satisfaction, any addition to the proof which this furnishes, that in claiming to be allowed to meet in CONVOCATION, the Church in Ireland is not advancing any novel claim, or asking for rights which it never before possessed and exercised. The Royal Declaration through which I have gone would prove conclusively, if there were no other proof, that if Royal Writs were now issued to convene a Convocation in Dublin, they would not create a new body, but revive an old one; and that, if the Royal Licence were granted to the body so convened to proceed to the discharge of any of the functions of Convocation, it would be no strange act of Royal authority, but one for which there is a clear and decisive precedent.

But this is but one part of the evidence in proof

¹ After reciting the title, it is said, “Which Book is remaining with *John Forth*, Clerk of the Upper House of Convocation.”

of these points which is adduced in the paper referred to. It was, as I said, presented to Government in March; and in May it was, by motion, laid on the table of the House of Commons, *together with the memorials of the Irish prelates, presented during 1861 and 1862, relating to Synodical action in Ireland, and extracts of correspondence relating thereto.* As yet nothing has been done in consequence. It does not belong to a class of cases which would be likely to be thought much of in the recess. But I cannot but feel confident that when the question is considered with the aid which the paper referred to affords, it will be seen that there is no valid, or even plausible reason, to justify any doubt that the Irish branch of the Church has of old enjoyed and exercised the right of meeting in Convocation, to perform, with the sanction of the Crown, all the acts which the English Convocations have performed under the same sanction. And when that point is once established, I should hope that it will be seen that withholding from us now the Royal Licence, which has been granted to both bodies in England, is not merely an injustice to us, but an injury to the whole United Church.

It is known to all of you that, when the first steps for reviving the powers of Convocation in England were taken, I was much opposed to the movement;—stating, however, in a pamphlet which I published on the question, that my opposition was not

founded upon any general principles, but upon the actual state of parties and opinions in the Church. Whether my fears were well grounded or not is a question which has ceased to be a practical one, and which it would therefore be scarcely justifiable to spend time in discussing anywhere, and least of all here. The movement had succeeded, and the English Convocations were in the enjoyment of unlimited powers of debate, and a certain, though limited, power of action. This was what is called an accomplished fact. The question no longer was, Whether it is good for the Church that liberty of action should be granted to its Convocations in England? but, Whether, such liberty being granted to them, we ought to seek it for ourselves? And when this became the question, I had no hesitation as to how it ought to be answered. As long as the actual state of things remained, I saw that we must either be legislated for by the English Convocations; or they must be allowed to legislate for England only, leaving our branch under different laws; or our inability to join them must prevent them from legislating at all. I could not regard—no one could regard—any of these positions as one which it was respectable or safe for us to occupy; and I therefore could not doubt that I ought to unite cordially with my brethren, in the attempt which they made to obviate the necessity of choosing among them, by obtaining the right to occupy our proper posi-

tion in a Convocation of co-ordinate authority with the Provincial Convocations of England.

This seems enough to say with regard to the concern of the Church in the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown in matters Ecclesiastical, for the period to which I have confined myself. As to acts of the Legislature during the same period, I do not know that there are any to which I need direct your attention, particularly as there is such full occupation for the little time which ought to remain to us in certain proceedings in the Lower House of Parliament, in which the Church was nearly and deeply concerned.

In May last, after some preparatory demonstrations, a motion was made by a member of the House of Commons, Mr. Dillwyn, for a Select Committee to inquire how far the present system of endowments for religious purposes in Ireland might *be amended, so as to conduce more to the welfare of all classes of Her Majesty's Irish subjects; to search the Journals of the House for any resolutions, passed since the Act of Union, having reference to the application of any surplus revenue arising from ecclesiastical endowments in Ireland; and to report how far such resolution or resolutions appeared to have been subsequently carried into effect.* It might seem, by the reference in the second part of the motion to the Resolutions

connected with the old Appropriation Clause, that the object of the mover was to renew the attempt to divert to other purposes a portion of the Church Endowments in Ireland, with which the Clause and Resolutions were connected. That attempt had been abandoned a quarter of a century before ; but not until it had engaged the two great parties of the State in a severe struggle, in the progress of which each had gained victories and suffered defeats ; more than one government had been broken up or displaced ; and the two houses more than once brought into collision. The revival of this enterprise would seem to be ambitious enough, but the mover's speech seemed to show that his design reached even further. He appears to be an enemy to all Ecclesiastical Endowments : but he did not embarrass his case by mootng the general question. He rested his motion upon the special injustice which the great mass of the Irish people suffered from having an Ecclesiastical Establishment kept up for the minority. This was an insult as well as an injury. All the violence and outrage which had so long disgraced the country and kept it in misery, was to be ascribed, according to him, to the unappeasable indignation with which this great wrong inspired the people of Ireland ; and there could be no hope of tranquillity or prosperity there, so long as this anomaly was suffered to exist !

This, which formed the staple of his speech,

seemed clearly to point at the overthrow of the Established Church in Ireland, as the peace-offering which was called for by her aggrieved people, and without which, everything else that was done to soothe them must be unavailing.

An amendment to this motion was brought forward in a different tone and spirit by Mr. Henry Seymour. It was for an address to Her Majesty, humbly requesting her to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into various points connected with the actual circumstances of the Church in Ireland, with a view to devising and recommending such changes in existing arrangements, both territorial and financial, as might render the Church more efficient for its objects. The speech by which this amendment was introduced was not marked by any hostile feeling to the Church. It did not treat the discovery of a surplus fund as impossible, but it laid down very distinctly the principle that such a fund could not be fairly said to exist until the wants of the Church under new arrangements had been ascertained and provided for; as it had been admitted, even by those who were little friendly to the Church, that its members had the *first* claim on its endowments, and that, until they were fully provided for, its resources ought not to be diverted to any other object.

This was a very different scheme from the one

in place of which it was proposed. And in fact, so far as the professed object of the inquiry was concerned, it might very well have been accepted by our friends in the House, if only security could be had for a mode of inquiry which would do full justice to the Church. But the difficulties in the way of obtaining this security were so great, that they decided that the safest course for the Church was to resist the amendment as well as the motion. The House, however, had no opportunity of giving an opinion on either. Under some difficulties, apparently arising from the state of business in the House, in obtaining time for a full discussion of his motion, Mr. Dillwyn resolved to give it up, at least, for the session. And just at the end of June, the order for resuming the adjourned debate upon it was discharged at his instance; and with the motion the amendment was necessarily dropped.

The failure of the motion and of the amendment would have been a very doubtful advantage, if the speeches by which they were introduced, particularly the former, had thereby remained unanswered. But the Church was not left at this disadvantage; for on the night on which those speeches were delivered, Mr. Whiteside replied to them with a full measure of his usual spirit and ability; and while he met in detail the detailed case which had been made against the Church, and maintained its claims, both on the grounds of equity and of policy, he did not fail to state distinctly, as the special

ground for upholding it, that it was the Church of the Reformation—the chief agent in effecting the Reformation in Ireland, and the chief agent in preserving to the country the great and manifold blessings which the Reformation had bestowed upon it.

The Motion and Amendment being disposed of, a clear stage was made for another member, Mr. Bernal Osborne, who from the first introduction of the subject, had shown great anxiety to obtain an opportunity of assailing the Church in Ireland in his own way. The House has had, for a good many years, so many opportunities of hearing him, and upon such a variety of subjects, that it ought to be able to anticipate tolerably well in what way he would deal with any new one that offered. But this was not a new one. For, fourteen years before, Mr. Osborne, then member for Middlesex, brought forward a motion that *the House do resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider the present state of the temporalities of the Church in Ireland*. And the avowed object of the motion was, to effect *the abolition of the territorial system of religion established in that country, and the substitution of the congregational system in its stead*. The same was the object of his present motion, which in form was for *a select Committee to inquire into the present ecclesiastical settlement of Ireland*.

In a Charge delivered soon after the debate in '49, and since published, I pointed out to you the destructive tendencies of the proposed change, and

called attention especially to the fact that it would be the abandonment of the principle of a Church establishment, just where it was most important that it should be maintained.¹ What I am here concerned in, however, is the mode of conducting the case against the Church. And this was so similar on both occasions, that the account which I gave in the Charge referred to of the mover's speech in '49, would serve for this last one, with scarcely the alteration of a word. There was, in his speeches upon both occasions, the same reckless exaggeration seasoned with the same old jokes and old stories; and even the same taunts against different members of the Ministry, from the Premier down, pointed with the same strong denunciations against the Church in Ireland, which he had culled from speeches delivered by them when out of office. His hatred of the Church in Ireland seems to be genuine, and there is little room to doubt that any measure which promised to weaken and injure her, would have received his cordial support. It appears equally clear, however, that this attack upon the Church was additionally acceptable to him, because he believed that the agitation of the question was likely to be embarrassing to the Ministry, and because it allowed him an opportunity of attacking them individually and collectively.

What the cause of this bitter animosity was, it would be rash to decide. But whatever were the

¹ See note B, at the end.

cause, the fact was unmistakably clear. And as it turned out, this constituent of his speech was an important element in securing its success. For while all the enemies of the Church applauded warmly the points which were made against the Church, all the opponents of the Government cheered no less vehemently the points against the Government. The speech was a brilliant success, so far as laughter and cheers went. But the triumph was followed by what any one who was accessible to a sense of shame would have felt to be a most humiliating exposure.

The task of answering him in '49 fell chiefly upon Mr. Hamilton, then one of the members for our University. He was prepared to discharge the duty most satisfactorily, by a thorough acquaintance with the subject. His speech went into the question fully; and it not only contained a sober, detailed, and convincing refutation of the attack which had been made upon the Church at the time, but it has provided a body of sound information on the circumstances of the Church which has since, I believe, been often resorted to by those who have had to deal with the question.

This year, his speech was answered by Sir Robert Peel and Sir Hugh Cairns. The former's was a manly, able, and well-informed speech; and, if it had stood alone, it would have been quite enough to expose the gross misrepresentations, the exaggerations, suppressions, and false colouring upon which the mover's case relied. But the reply of Sir Hugh

Cairns entered still more into detail, and did the work even more thoroughly. In fact, though I have been a reader of Parliamentary Debates now for a good many years, I have seldom read a more entire demolition of a case, and I have never read such a complete exposure of the discreditable devices resorted to, to give a bad case a plausible appearance.

No one can deny that the Church population in Ireland is painfully small, and, as it is also very unequally distributed, particular instances could easily be culled of parishes which would supply an assailant with materials for very telling points against the Church, when the question is considered and settled numerically. And though that is a low, and narrow, and delusive mode of dealing with the important question of an Established Church, yet, as it unfortunately is a common mode, one must be prepared for a large use of such instances whenever the Church is to be attacked. Nor would it be fair, perhaps, to blame the mover, as an avowed enemy of the Church, and an inveterate caricaturist, if he fell into a little, or more than a little, exaggeration, in his desire to give such instances the ludicrous effect of which they are so susceptible, on the numerical principle. But exaggeration is quite too lenient a term to convey any adequate conception of the treatment to which the speaker's materials were subjected, which far exceeded the licence usually taken even by the least scrupulous adversaries. Some of the examples, indeed, would

hardly have been believed to be genuine, but that, when they were brought forward, the speech had been so recently delivered that it was in every one's memory or might be easily referred to.

Thus, he stated the number of souls which each Bishop in England had under his charge, and the number under the charge of each Bishop in Ireland. And, as might be anticipated, the difference was very startling. But how was it made out? The number under the charge of each Bishop in Ireland is made out by dividing the whole number of the Bishops into the whole number of the members of the Church, which is, of course, the proper model, and, if the same process were adopted for England, no objection could be made to his using the contrast of the two quotients for his purpose. But he is not satisfied with this fair contrast, striking as it would be; and he employs a very characteristic device to heighten it. The whole population of England and Wales is about twenty millions. Of these there belong to the Church, according to some calculations, twelve millions; according to others, ten millions; according to others, still less. But Mr. Osborne finds the average number under a Bishop's charge in England by dividing the number of the Bishops, not into the number of Episcopalians, but into the whole population! And it is the quotient thus found for England,—that is, one twice too great,—that he contrasts with the one which he had found for Ireland by the proper process.

But while I am upon this subject, I may mention something which appears not undeserving of attention, though I have not seen it noticed anywhere. In Sir Hugh Cairns' speech, the mode of calculating the average Church population of English and Irish sees is only stated as I have just stated it, without any mention of the numbers which the process brings out. These numbers appear, however, in the speech to which he was replying. The number for England is one million and a half,—which, supposing the dividend taken to have been the right one, instead of having been, as it was, nearly, if not altogether, twice too large, would be correct enough. But then the number for Ireland, which even in Mr. Osborne's mode of looking for it ought to be 50,000, is set down as 5,000! I speak of the report in the *Times*, which is the only one that I have seen. But from what I am about to say, there would appear to be no room to doubt that in this respect, it was perfectly correct. I should unhesitatingly have set down the number given there as an error of the press, but that it occurs at least three times in the report, and everywhere it is 5,000. Nor is this all, for in one place it is found in such a connexion that it is absolutely impossible that 50,000 should have been in the speech as delivered. For it is said: "A small parish of 5,000 souls in England is looked after by a rector and probably a couple of curates. In Ireland 5,000 people make

a diocese with a Bishop receiving about £5,000 a year, and deans and chapters." Here it is plain that the number spoken must have been the number printed, not the true number, for no one would speak of a *small* parish in England of 50,000 souls. And again he makes use of this same number to enforce the reasonableness of his plan of cutting down the Bishops to half their present number. He asks: "Why should these Bishops with only 5,000 people in their dioceses get from £4,000 to £6,000 a year? A judge receives only £3,000, and yet he has something to do for his money, whereas an Irish Bishop has very little to do."

Here then is one of the many enormous abuses which this ardent Church Reformer has found in the Church in Ireland, and which have so kindled his righteous indignation against that monster abuse and grievance, that he calls upon all who have any respect for right and justice to join with him—not in sweeping it away, for while he does all that he can to prove that it ought not to be suffered to exist, he disclaims any intention of destroying it—but in bringing its abuses within moderate dimensions. And this has not only formed a count in the indictment brought against the Church before Parliament, but it has gone upon the wings of the press to raise a cry of indignation against this grievance in every part of the civilized world. And you have seen the mode in which it has been made out;—the average number of souls in each Irish diocese,

though much smaller than the friends of the Church would wish it to be, was too large to serve the purpose of her enemies, and so this speaker just divides it by ten before he makes use of it !

There seems to be no other alternative but this, unless we suppose that, dividing 600,000 by 12, this veteran Church Reformer really brought out 5,000 as the quotient.

But it appears that even dioceses averaging 5,000 members of the Church could not be relied upon to produce the impression, with respect to the Irish Church, which this member was anxious, for the ends of truth and justice, to leave upon the minds of his hearers, and so he selects some examples in which the numbers fall far below this average. Thus he said: "The united dioceses of Kilfenora and Kilmacduagh, in which there are about 686 Protestants, has a Bishop at 4,000*l.* a year, with the usual staff." This was a very startling statement. Sir R. Peel and Sir H. Cairns somewhat diminished its effect by the explanation that no such united diocese as that of Kilfenora and Kilmacduagh exists or ever existed. These are very small dioceses, the former of which had been long united to Killaloe and the latter to Clonfert, and the whole four were united together under the Irish Church 'Temporalities' Act. The united dioceses now are therefore Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert, and Kilmacduagh; and the two selected out of the whole to form a united

diocese, for the purpose of his speech, have together about ten or eleven parishes, while the two others number together above eighty. It is, of course, as the Bishop of the whole united diocese, that the Bishop receives 4,000*l.*, or rather, as Sir R. Peel states, 3,310*l.*, and the number of members of the Church in his diocese is not, as stated by the mover, 686, but 15,906.

The difference between parishes in the two countries is, according to the mover, nearly as wide as that between the sees. "In England there is one clergyman to every 2,612 people, whereas in Ireland there is one to every 325 persons." This is a striking contrast; and the process by which it is brought out is as extraordinary as any other of the honourable member's feats. In the number given as the average population of an Irish parish, he is not quite 100 wrong. Counting 1,634 parishes, and 691,872 Church inhabitants, it would be 423. There is therefore not much to correct here. But it is somewhat different as regards the number for England. How that is brought out cannot be better stated than it is by Sir Hugh Cairns: "There is a gross population of 20,000,000. and there are in the Church in England, in round numbers, 18,000 [parishes]. The hon. member divided 18,000 into the 20,000,000; but even that was not enough, for it would only bring out a quotient somewhere about 1,000, so he doubled the quotient, and added 600 to it!"

I need not go farther, particularly as the masterly reply to which I refer must be known to all my hearers ; and it will therefore be enough to say, without entering into details in proof of the statements, that the answer to all points of the attack is as complete as it is to these numerical points, which formed the great strength of our enemies.

It may appear a mistake to class an attack which has been repelled so decidedly upon all points among the events unfavourable to the Church. Calumnies against our Church of various kinds are in constant circulation, in forms and under circumstances which render it hard or impossible to meet them. And this being the case, when a formal and deliberate attack had been made in Parliament, and made with such an amount of animosity as rendered it very certain that nothing to our prejudice was kept back which could have been brought forward with any show of truth,—when such an attack, and under such circumstances, has been made, and has drawn out able defenders of the Church, who have not only repelled its assailants at all points, but have made the strength of the case for the Church understood in a way that it could not have been, if such an opportunity of stating it had not been given—when this is the case, assuredly, it will be thought, we have little reason to class this attack among the events unfavourable to the Church, but rather good cause

to rejoice that it has been so publicly made as to admit of being publicly refuted.

This is no doubt true to a certain extent. But there is a good deal to set upon the opposite side, notwithstanding. It is very certain that the enemies of the Church have been so thoroughly refuted that they ought to be restrained from ever renewing the attack. But, it is equally certain that their defeat will have no such effect. The member who originated the discussion of the question last session has already declared his intention of repeating his motion next year. And in whatever way the subject comes forward, the member whose arithmetical prolusions we have been considering will certainly not be held back by the withering exposure which he has undergone, from treating the House to a new edition of his speech. He will probably find it necessary to correct some of the grosser misrepresentations to which public attention has been directed. But with as many corrections as may be thus forced upon him, with perhaps some little novelty in the jokes and other garniture, the substance of his attack will be much the same. And it would be a mistake to expect that, when it re-appears, it will prove to have been deprived of its power of doing mischief by what has been done, in and out of Parliament, to exhibit its utter unfairness. Such attacks are much more to popular taste than such defences. They are listened to with much more pleasure, and are

remembered better. And next year, when this member rises again to amuse the House, the form in which Sir Hugh Cairns' reply will be remembered by most of his hearers, will probably be, that it was very able, of course, and that he certainly showed that there were some exaggerations in the pleasant speech that he was answering, but that still it was not to be denied that there was a great deal of truth in it too. And so the House will begin to listen to him with as little prejudice as if the true character of what was to be expected from him had never been exposed.

And then, in the interval, not only have we to look forward to unceasing and unscrupulous exertions on the part of our old enemies to prejudice our cause, but to see all their exertions seconded by a new and formidable auxiliary. When the Parliamentary attack on the Church was coming on, the *Times* took an early opportunity of declaring open war against us; and it followed up the declaration by some articles which were just as venomous and as unfair as the speech which was so admirably exposed by Sir Hugh Cairns. And as this journal has thrown itself with such bitter cordiality into the contest, we may be sure that it will carry on the warfare, so as to make the importance of its accession to the ranks of our enemies felt. Especially we must look forward to its making preparation for the next Parliamentary attack upon us, as it draws near, by

some of those dashing articles which, very little to the credit of England, produce such an effect upon the public mind there ; though even those who are most influenced by them never hesitate to speak of the source from which they come as utterly devoid of principle, either political or religious. One hears this in England almost as often as the *Times* is mentioned. But whatever may be the foundation for the statement generally, if it be meant to ascribe want of sincerity to the writer, I do not think it applies to the Church articles. It has been publicly stated that the writer of them is a Dissenter—Roman Catholic or Protestant—having been formerly a member of our Church. Of course I do not know whether this assertion is true or not, but whatever or whoever the writer may be, I must say that his enmity to the Church seems to be perfectly sincere. I say enmity to the Church, because it is abundantly evident that our branch of the Church is not the only object of the writer's hostility. Whenever a favourable opportunity offers of attacking or disparaging the English Bishops or Clergy, it is taken advantage of in such a tone and spirit as to make it very evident that the English branch of the Church would be attacked as bitterly as the Irish branch, if it could be attacked as safely.

But the Church in England has so strong a hold upon the feelings of a large and important part of the nation that it can only be attacked

occasionally and cautiously ; while in carrying on the warfare against us no such management, either as to time or manner, is needed. And no doubt of those who carry on this warfare in Ireland, there are many who have no object in view beyond the overthrow of the Church Establishment in this country. But among our assailants in England, there are certainly not a few who look further, and whose chief motive in attacking us is, that they see clearly that overthrowing or weakening the Established Church here, would be a most important step towards effecting the same object there. So that besides our own special enemies, we have in array against us also the many who are irreconcilably hostile to the Church Establishment in England, and whose nearest object is its overthrow.

But nothing renders the prospective attack upon us more formidable than the little ground that we have to hope that it will be met upon proper principles by the Government. And I say this without any special reference to the party in power. We have no reason to complain of the present Ministry in the case, but the contrary. They resolved to support the Church, and to meet both the original motion for a committee of the whole House, and the amendment for a Royal commission, and finally the motion for a select committee, with a direct negative. But the grounds on which this course was defended were far from being perfectly satisfactory to the friends of the Church. One of the

members of the Cabinet, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had published an elaborate exposition and defence of the true principles upon which the maintenance of a Church Establishment rests, as a duty to which the State is bound in its relation to God. He had even applied the principle expressly to the vindication of the maintenance of the Reformed Catholic Church in Ireland as the Established Church of the country. But he took no part in the debate. The Secretary for Ireland, it is true, speaking on the part of the Government, stated that the question at issue affected the Church in England no less than the Church in Ireland, and that they could not be separated in the case. But the two Cabinet ministers, who spoke on different nights, rested their defence of the course which Government took altogether upon grounds of convenience and expediency, leaving the question of principle and duty wholly untouched; and leaving Government free to take, and themselves to defend, just the opposite course upon any future occasion on which the Church might be exposed to a similar attack. There is reason to fear that if the task of defending us had devolved on their opponents, it would have been discharged in the same way. And indeed there is little doubt, I believe, that if the attack were upon the Church in England, its defence would be made to rest by the majority of both parties upon the like low and unstable grounds,

rather than upon the higher and safer foundation of principle.

I believe that no Establishment can be permanently supported upon these lower grounds. The Church in England has so much of the kind of strength that we want, that its security, for the present, is much less affected than ours, when its defence is made in argument to rest on insufficient grounds. But I am sure that, even to the Church in England, the time will come, when its defenders will be made to feel that they cannot, without perilling its safety, shrink any longer from putting forward the true principle of a Church Establishment. This time is actually come to us ; and it is much to be regretted that so few of our friends see the importance and the necessity of basing their defence of the Church in this country on principle.

But our safety does not depend either upon our friends or our foes, but upon Him who rules over both. Let us serve Him, and honour Him, and trust in Him, and we need not fear what man can do unto us.

I believe that this is the first time that I have ever addressed you on an occasion like the present, without saying something of the Church Education Society, and the Irish Education question. I need not say that the omission has not arisen from any

change either in my opinions or my feelings with reference to the question, or from any abatement of the warm interest that I have taken in the cause of the Society. None of you will suspect that it has. I might say, in the way of accounting for it, that properly speaking, there has been nothing in the history of the Society since I last addressed you which was clearly entitled to a place in my present Charge. Some things, no doubt, did occur which seemed calculated to weaken the Society, and at the same time corrupt the Church. But they have been so happily over-ruled, that while the Church has suffered much less than was to be apprehended, the Society seems really to have been strengthened; insomuch that I believe that the cause of the Society—which is the cause of Scriptural education—never had a stronger hold upon the consciences and the hearts of the Clergy than it has at this time. This is much more important than anything connected with the state of its funds. But I believe that even in that respect also, its condition is encouraging,—that it enjoys a large measure of prosperity, which needs nothing more to make it larger than that the Society should be steadily and actively worked. And convinced as I am that the well-being of the Church is deeply involved in the prosperity of this Society, and even more in the steadfastness of the Clergy to its cause, I must rejoice at its state and prospects, not for its own sake only, but for the sake of the Church also. And when such

has been the issue of all that has happened to the Society, it would seem hard to find anything connected with it, whatever were its aspect at the time, which ought to be inserted in a Charge that is professedly confined to events unfavourable to the interests of the Church.

I might say this, and it would be true: but it would not be the true reason of the omission. My reason for leaving the subject out altogether on the present occasion is, that the controversy has been recently revived in a way which seems to require a much fuller review of it than I could give in a Charge in which so many other subjects are treated, however briefly and imperfectly. And I think that what the case requires will be best done, so far as I can do it, by the publication of my last Charge, with such notes as it may appear advisable to add to it. And this work I mean, God willing, to take in hand with as little delay as possible.

I might end here, but that it has pleased Almighty God, within a few days, to take away the eminent Prelate who had for more than thirty years presided over this Province as Metropolitan. All who hear me will, I am sure, feel that his death, and more especially when danger seems to threaten the Church, is one of the class of events—one of the *fata Ecclesiæ adversa*—which I have been considering ;

and one of such importance, too,—particularly at this time—that it ought not to be passed over altogether in silence. I do not mean, however, to say much of the life and character of the late Archbishop. I should not, indeed, think it necessary or quite in place to do so, if I were beginning my Charge instead of ending it. He had been so long and so conspicuously before the Church and the public, that he was for a good while, I think, generally understood and rightly estimated. And since his death, in the public prints and in the various pulpits of our metropolis, his great and good qualities have been cordially acknowledged. His ability, his energy, his fearlessness, and his honesty of purpose, have been commemorated by all who spoke of him; while a feeling tribute has been paid by those who enjoyed his intimacy, to the warmth of his heart, his strong affections, and his large generosity; and, finally, without invading unduly the sacred privacy of a death-bed chamber, testimony has been borne to the simple faith in the blood of Christ, which *cleanseth from all sin*, and to the deep humility and entire self-renunciation, which made the closing scenes of his life so happy and so edifying.

We are not to suppose that those who spoke most largely and most warmly of the deceased Prelate intended to represent him as faultless, because they spoke only of his virtues. No one expects in the pulpit, upon such an occasion, the critical and

balancing tone of the historian. All that it would be reasonable to require is, that the good qualities ascribed to the deceased should be such as he really possessed. I believe that the discourses in question fully met this requirement, and that all the high and all the amiable qualities which they ascribed to our late Archbishop really belonged to him. Indeed, I am so far from having any disposition to make any deductions from what has been said in his praise, that I wish, on the contrary, to speak, in addition, of a claim upon the gratitude of Irish Churchmen, which he possessed in a large measure, but which either was not spoken of at all, or was less dwelt upon (as was natural) than I feel it ought to be in this place. I refer to his thorough devotion to the cause of the Church in Ireland.

When he came over to this country, he had spent above forty years from his birth in England, and was very decidedly English in all his habits, and tastes, and prejudices. There was a good deal to repel and alienate him here. Circumstances, to which it is unnecessary to advert particularly, separated him from the first from a large body of the clergy. And he not only knew that he was unpopular among them, but he thought that they were banded together against him by party feeling, which prevented them from looking fairly at any of his acts, or of doing justice to him in anything. I think that in this he was, to a great extent, mistaken; and that the mistake and the soreness of

feeling connected with it, if they did not owe their origin altogether to others, were for a good while artificially kept up by others. But whether the impression was well or ill founded—whether arising naturally or artificially excited,—as it was real, its effect upon his feelings would be the same, and could not have been of a kind to increase his attachment to the Church in this country. But he, from the first, identified himself entirely with its rights and interests, and that, apparently, as much from feeling as from a sense of duty: and this continued through his whole course. On every occasion on which she required a defender, he came forward with characteristic courage and ability to uphold her cause.

It is very well known—at least, to all who hear me—how widely I differed from him upon one important question, in which the best interests of the Church were deeply involved: and, upon some minor points, I was not able always to agree with him as to what was best for its interests. But I was thoroughly satisfied that for whatever he believed to be for the good of the Church, he was ready to do as much and to sacrifice as much as any of her sons. His boldness, energy, and talents, and the influence which these qualities had won for him, would make his advocacy of great importance at all times. But its importance is not a little enhanced by the state and prospects of the Church, at the conjuncture at which he has been taken

away. And those upon whom, in God's providential arrangements for His Church, the choice of his successor devolves will find it very hard, in this respect, so to supply his place, that if the perils which menace the Church actually fall upon her, she shall not have cause to mourn,

χήτεϊ τοιοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς, ἀμύνειν δούλιον ἡμαρ.

We may be thankful that the task of filling the high office which his death has left vacant does not belong to us, my brethren. But we should be very wrong if we thought that we had no duty connected with the choice. We ought to be earnest in prayer to Him in whose hands are all hearts, that He may so direct the hearts of those to whom He has assigned that anxious duty, that, not only as regards the qualities to which I have referred, but all others also, the man may be chosen who is best fitted for the place and the time. And when the choice is made, we ought not to cease to pray earnestly that he who is chosen may be so enlightened, and guided, and strengthened, that he may discharge the duties of his high office wisely and faithfully, to the glory of God and the good of His Church.

NOTES.

NOTE A.—Page 41.

ON MARK XIII. 32.

I was obliged to advert to this important text in the Charge, but my notice of it there was necessarily very brief. I cannot, even here, attempt to treat it fully; but I feel it to be necessary to add something, in the way of explaining and supporting the little that is said upon it in the place referred to.

From an early period, great reluctance has been shown to receive the obvious and natural sense of the Blessed Lord's words; and various devices have been resorted to from time to time to soften it, or to explain it away. But however natural this timidity is, I cannot think it justifiable. What it would be unpardonable presumption to assert upon any lower authority, it seems to be no less presumptuous to shrink from asserting, when it comes to us upon Divine authority. And the fact that the Blessed Lord in the flesh knew not the day and hour in which He is to come to judge the world, seems to come to us as clearly upon His own authority as anything else that we believe, because He has declared it. It cannot be doubted not only that this is the plain meaning of His words, but that it is very hard to draw any other meaning from them.

The interpretation which has obtained most favour among those who are unwilling to receive the declaration in this sense is, that while the day and the hour of the coming of the Son of Man were, of course, known to Him in His Divine Nature, they were unknown to Him in His Human Nature. This does not mean, that though He knew this, as He knew all things, when He was in the form of God, He was ignorant of it, when He came in the likeness of Man. This is the very sense which it is intended to get rid of. What is meant is, that when He was in the likeness of Man—at the very moment that He was speaking—He knew the time in question in His Divine Nature, but was ignorant of it in His Human Nature. But this seems to be open to insurmountable objections. Were we at liberty to suppose that there were two Persons—a Divine and a Human Person—united in the Lord, it would be easy to conceive—or indeed, rather, one could not but hold—that they differed infinitely in

knowledge,—that while the latter was ignorant of many things, the former knew all things. No one, however, ventures to solve the difficulty in this way, at least in words, because every one knows that the Unity of Person in the Lord is as much an article of faith as the duality of natures. But when it is said, that, at one and the same time, He knew the day of judgment as the Word, but was ignorant of it as Man; or that while He knew it, as regarded His Divine Nature, He was ignorant of it, as regarded His Human Nature; or that His Divine Nature knew it, but His Human Nature was ignorant of it; we are, in reality, though not in words, supposing Him to be made up of two Persons.

But some think that, whatever the objection may be against these interpretations, it cannot be so insurmountable as that to which the more natural interpretation is exposed,—that we cannot adopt any interpretation of the Lord's words which would represent Him as having undergone anything beyond an outward or relative change in taking our nature. From the impossibility of conceiving any change in the Infinite, they seem to have inferred, if they did not confound the two things, that any such change is impossible. But, however safely we may hold that it is impossible that any such change can take place through any other agency, it would seem very rash and presumptuous to deny the possibility of its being effected by the will of the Infinite Being Himself. I should say this, supposing that we had no way of arriving at any conclusion on the question but the *high priori road*. But we have a much safer, though a humbler way. To believers in Revelation, the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity, or rather the history of His life in the flesh, furnishes ample means of coming to a certain conclusion upon this point—a conclusion that is not affected by the uncertainties which, confessedly, attach to all our reasonings when infinity is an element in the subject-matter of them. In this wonderful history, we are allowed to see the Infinite and the Finite, the Divine and the Human, in personal union in “the Man Christ Jesus.” To our apprehensions, this union would appear absolutely impossible, if the Infinite remained unchanged. But, as I have already said, where the Infinite is concerned, we can rely but little upon any collection of our own reason, unless it be confirmed by Revelation. Here, however, there is no want of such confirmation, nor can we, I think, read the Holy Scriptures fairly without finding it.

The Divine Word seems to be clearly exhibited to us there, as

greatly changed in His union with frail humanity. Not only was all His heavenly glory laid by, when He tabernacled in the flesh, but all His infinite attributes and powers seem, for the same time, to have been in abeyance, so to speak. And by this, some thing more is meant than that the manifestation and exercise them were suspended. That is undoubtedly true, but it seems to fall far short of the whole truth. It appears that there was not merely a voluntary suspension of the exercise of them, but a voluntary renunciation of the capacity of exercising them, for the time. This involves no change of His essence or nature ; and no destruction of His Divine powers, as if they had ceased to exist, or loss of them, so that they could not be resumed. Finite beings often undergo such a suspension, involuntarily, without its leading to any such consequences.¹ And it can make no difference in this respect, that in the Infinite Being it is undergone by an act of His own will. Nor are the wonderful works which were then wrought by Him at all at variance with this view of the state of the Incarnate Word. Infinitely as they transcended the natural powers of man, they did not go beyond the powers which may supernaturally be bestowed upon man. For He Himself declares that the Apostles should not only do such works as He had done, but *greater works*. There is nothing, therefore, in their nature or their degree, to determine whether they were wrought by the proper power of the Divine Word, or by power bestowed upon the Incarnate Word. But we are not without ample means of deciding this question.

It is not surprising that it should be generally thought that the miraculous power which was displayed by the Redeemer was possessed and exercised by Him as an essential property of the Divine element in His constitution. This, indeed, would be the conclusion to which, probably, every one would come who ventured to speculate on this great mystery apart from Scripture. But Scripture gives a very different view of the

¹ "And besides, as we are greatly in the dark upon what the exercise of our living powers depends, so we are wholly ignorant what the powers themselves depend upon ; the powers themselves, as distinguished not only from their actual exercise, but also from the present capacity of exercising them ; and as opposed to their destruction : for sleep, or however, a swoon, shows us, not only that these powers exist when not exercised, as the passive power of motion does in inanimate matter ; but shows also that they exist when there is no present capacity of exercising them ; or that the capacities of exercising them for the present, as well as the actual exercise of them, may be suspended, and yet the powers themselves remain undisturbed."—BUTLER, *Analogy*, Part 1, Ch. i.

nature and effects of the Incarnation. It seems distinctly to teach us that when the everlasting Son condescended to take our nature upon Him, He came, not outwardly only, but in truth, into a new relation to the Father, in which He was really His *messenger* and His *servant*—dependent upon the Father for everything, and deriving from Him directly everything that He needed for His work. All this, indeed, seems to be most distinctly declared by Himself. He says: "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do" (John v. 19). And again, "I can of mine own self do nothing." (Ib. 30). Again, "My doctrine is not mine but His that sent Me" (vii. 16). Again, "He that sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things that I have heard of Him." (viii. 26). "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as my Father hath taught Me, I speak these things" (Ib. 28). And again, "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. (xiv. 10); "And the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent Me." (Ib. 24).

These texts must be familiar to every reader of the Bible, though their true meaning seems to be very strange to many. But they are very plain and very express, and they entirely agree together. They testify directly to the fact that the state of the Son in the flesh was one of absolute and entire dependence upon the Father, both for Divine knowledge and Divine power. And upon this fact, they are so full and so express, that it is unnecessary to look for any other evidence of it of the same kind. But I am tempted to add one or two striking passages which seem to bear the same testimony, less directly, indeed, but not less impressively, or less conclusively.

Nothing, for example, can bespeak more absolute authority over death and the grave, than His call to the dead Lazarus to arise: "He cried," we are told, "with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth."—(John xi. 43). And the confidence of absolute authority in which the command is uttered is most fully justified by the promptitude with which it is obeyed: "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go."—Ib. 44.

Neither in the tone nor in the substance of His command to the dead, is there any reference discoverable to any power but His own.

There is no cure performed by Him, nor, indeed, any miracle of any other kind recorded of Him in His whole history, which wears less the appearance of being wrought by derived or dependent power. And yet there is something which goes before, that seems to suggest irresistibly that the power exercised by Him on this memorable occasion was bestowed upon Him by the Father, in answer to prayer offered at the time. For just before He called to Lazarus, we read: "And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me."—Ib. 41, 42.

No one ever doubts, I suppose, that this thanksgiving to the Father, for *having heard Him*, has reference to a prayer offered to the Father, and accepted by Him. The prayer was offered in silence, and the intimation that it was heard was silently given. But I should think that there is no more doubt that both really took place than there is when both were audible, and we are actually told the words in which they were expressed, as in the next chapter, where, at the end of the mental conflict, which we are allowed to see, we read His prayer and the answer to it: "Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." And though a prayer was really secretly offered and answered at the grave of Lazarus, it seems hardly possible to doubt that it had reference to the wonderful work which He was about to perform; and that it was, in fact, a prayer for power to perform it; and that it was in the power bestowed in answer to His prayer that this great miracle was wrought. The whole story supplies abundant matter for reflection, but I cannot dwell upon it farther here.¹

I must, however, give one more passage which I think dis-

¹ Every one is likely to be reminded here of the remarkable passage in the life of Elijah, which is related in the First Book of Kings, xvii. 1. "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." There is so little here to suggest any dependence of this act of the Prophet upon prayer, that most readers, I should suppose, are surprised when they find the miraculous visitation upon the land of Israel which followed, referred to by St. James as an example of the power of *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man*. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." James v. 17.

closes to us at least as much as any that have gone before of the extent of the change which the Blessed Lord had undergone, when He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. When St. Peter rashly attempts to deliver Him by force from the hands of His enemies, He rebukes him, and tells him, that, if He desired to be delivered, He had no need of human aid. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels." This passage suggests a great deal which is eminently interesting, but with which we are not immediately concerned. But it also has a most important bearing on the point which we are at present upon. We know that by Him were all things created, that all worlds, visible and invisible, and all the forms of existence, material and immaterial, by which they are inhabited were made by Him ; that when He was in the form of God all angels worshipped Him ; and that in the presence of His glory the seraphim veiled their faces while they adored Him. And when we see Him in the hands of men, mocked and reviled, buffeted and scourged and spit upon, we see a marvellous manifestation indeed of His great humility. But we feel, all the while, that all this was done only because it was His good pleasure, for the accomplishment of His work, to submit Himself to shame and to pain ; and that, at any moment that He pleased, it would come to an end. And so it was. The text that I have just quoted proves that so it was ; but it at the same time seems to disclose to us more of the depth to which He had humbled Himself than any extremity of indignity and suffering to which He was subjected could reveal. Because it shows that, if He would be delivered from this shame and pain by the angels whom He had created, He was to procure their aid, not by commanding them to come to His deliverance, but by praying to His Heavenly Father to send them to set Him free. The object would be effected with certainty. But the mode in which it was to be effected discloses, to my mind more strikingly than any other passage in Scripture, the great and wonderful change which for the time had taken place in His relation to the unseen world.

All these passages bear witness, directly and indirectly, to the reality and the depth of the humiliation of the Blessed Lord when actually in the form of man. But there is another (Phil. ii. 6, 7,) which seems to unveil to us what was done in the unseen world to prepare Him for the state to which he was about to descend. In it He seems to be shown to us, when in the form of God, divesting Himself of all that was incompatible with the

state of humiliation to which He was about to descend—not holding tenaciously the equality with God which He enjoyed, but letting it go, and *emptying Himself*. It is the results of this wonderful process which the texts that I have been reviewing present to us. And wonderful as the process is, and not forgetting even the intense energy of the expression *ἐκένωσε*, do not the results accord with it? Do not the passages to which I have before referred exhibit Him as actually *emptied*,—emptied of His Divine glory, of His Divine power, and of His Divine omniscience, and receiving back from His Heavenly Father what He had laid down, in such measure as was needful for His work while it was going on—only doing what He was commanded and enabled to do, and only teaching what He was taught and commanded to teach. And when it came to an end, when he had finished the work which had been given to Him to do, and His humiliation was over, He could pray to the Father, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” And His prayer was answered. *All power*, He Himself declares, *was given to Him in heaven and in earth*. The Apostle testifies that *God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*”

Some say that they can in some measure understand and believe every part of the preparatory process referred to, except that in which the Lord’s omniscience is concerned; but that that is so essential to His nature, that they cannot conceive or admit that it could have been laid aside even temporarily. I must myself, on the contrary, confess that though I believe every part of the process that I find in the Bible, I do not, properly speaking, understand any part of it. I am disposed, however, to believe that, if the whole were perfectly understood by us, we should see that there is just the same difficulty in every part of the change which the Lord is represented as having undergone—neither more nor less in any one than in any other.

But however that may be, it is to me not a question of reason, but of fact; and of the actual facts of the case, the true and only evidence is to be found in God’s Word. One who looks at the subject in this way, and who examines the Holy Scriptures as the only source of his knowledge upon it, ready to believe all that he finds there, will not, I think, be startled by the statement in St. Mark, wonderful as it is,—if he comes to it after having read

and considered the passages which we have been reviewing : at least I am sure that he will not be startled by it, as he would be if he came upon that text without such preparation.

I do not mean that what we learn from these passages, concerning the state of the Incarnate Word and His relation to the Father, would warrant us in inferring that He was actually ignorant of anything knowable. But when they teach us that all His superhuman knowledge was supplied by the Father, we are led to look upon that as possible which, without such information, we should regard as impossible. All things that the Omniscient Father knows,—that is, all things,—doubtless, were known to the Son, when He was *in the form of God*. But it appears that, when He became man, and dwelt among us, of this infinite knowledge He only possessed as much as was imparted to Him. And this being the case, we must see that, if anything which could not be known naturally was not made known to Him by the Father, it would not be known by Him. Though we see this, however, we have no right, as I said, to conclude that there really was anything unknown to Him, because we have no right to conclude that there is any knowledge which the Father would withhold from Him. And, accordingly, even when we see it elsewhere declared expressly and emphatically by Him, concerning the time of *the coming of the Son of Man*, “Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels in heaven, but my Father only,” we do not regard the well-beloved Son as intended to be included, when angels and men are said to be ignorant of that time; or excluded, when it is declared that it is known to the Father only. It is not until He himself declares expressly, as we learn from St. Mark that He did, that this is so ; that is, it is not until we learn that He himself said, “Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father,” that we believe that He too was ignorant of the time when He is to come again to judge the world.

The declaration is so plain and express, that even if it stood alone, I do not think it would be reasonable to entertain any doubt about its real meaning. But I can hardly think such a doubt possible, when the natural interpretation of the text is sustained by the concurrent testimony of such a number and such a variety of texts as we have been looking at. And when once we are satisfied that the Lord has really declared this fact concerning Himself, we seem to be no more warranted in disbelieving or doubting it, than we should be in disbelieving or doubting anything else that we are sure that He has said.

NOTE B.—P. 81.

ON THE SUBSTITUTION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL FOR THE
PAROCHIAL SYSTEM IN IRELAND.

INSTEAD of writing anything new upon this subject, I subjoin an Extract from a former Charge. When it was written, the circumstances of the Church were so similar to those in which she now stands, that it needs no alteration to make it applicable to the present day. The Charge from which the Extract is taken was delivered in 1849, and published in the following year, only in part, however, and as an Appendix—a second Appendix—to another Charge delivered in 1848, but not published until 1850. It was not a very wise mode of printing anything which one wished to have generally read, as one Appendix is more than enough for most readers, and accordingly, I believe that the second Appendix referred to is very little known. I hope the following extract from it may have more readers, as time has only deepened my conviction of the vital importance of the subject considered in it, and of the soundness of the views.

“We are told that the enemies of the Church are banded together in closer union than ever before, and that we are to look forward in the next Session of Parliament to a more vigorous and persevering assault upon the Church in this country, than any which it has hitherto had to encounter. There is no reason to doubt that the threat will be executed. The warfare has, in fact, begun in an experimental motion on the Temporalities of the Irish Church which was made late in the last Session, with the avowed object of effecting *the abolition of the territorial system of religion established in Ireland, and the substitution of a congregational system in its stead.*¹ And what passed on the occasion is calculated to give some useful information, both as to the way in which future attacks will be made, and the way in which they will be met.

“The motion was sustained in the usual strain of exaggeration. One who listened to the mover, would believe that the Church in Ireland is not only a flagrant injustice in principle, but a

¹ “The motion which was made by Mr. B. Osborne, on July the 10th, 1849, that the House do resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider the present state of the Temporalities of the Church in Ireland.”

monstrous abuse in its details; that pluralities and sinecures abound in it; that Churches are built and repaired for the accommodation of congregations which might be contained in the smallest room in their respective parishes; and ministers largely paid to take care of scanty flocks which they can scarcely find. And that this extravagant apparatus is employed with the usual result of such profligate waste. The churches provided at such expense are seldom attended by their scanty congregations; and when they do attend, it is a chance whether their well-paid minister will appear.

“All these railing accusations have been handed down for the use of the assailants of the Church in Ireland, through their predecessors in this work, from a distant date. They were probably from the first a good deal overcharged. But at all events the Church has undergone a process since, both of reform and reduction, which renders them now outrageously false. Pluralities have ceased; extensive unions have been dissolved; sinecures have been abolished; and, as to the incomes of the Clergy, all have undergone the wholesale reduction of one-fourth; and then, unless they fall below the moderate amount at which Ecclesiastical tax commences, they are subject to a further reduction from that impost; and whatever be their amount, they are to be diminished by the poor-rate, to which no limit can be assigned. In this process of reduction, even those who enjoyed the best clerical incomes have been brought down to a point at which they ought to have ceased to be objects of envy, while the animosity which has not been appeased by the extremities to which the majority of the remainder have been reduced, must be rancorous indeed.

“But the old charges are stereotyped, and it is troublesome to alter them, and they serve their purpose best in their ancient form. And so—altogether unchanged, or slightly modified, with a parenthetical acknowledgment, perhaps, that in some respects there has been an improvement—they are still regularly brought forward whenever the Church is to be attacked. And the occasion to which I refer was no exception to the general rule. There was in the mover’s speech a full measure of reckless exaggeration, seasoned with rather more than the ordinary allowance of ribaldry. But the part of his speech on which he chiefly seemed to rest his hopes of success was made up of certain strong passages which he had culled from speeches delivered on different occasions by different members of the present ministry, when out of office; which undoubtedly supplied him with materials for very cutting

taunts on their leaving the work which he was commencing, so long unattempted, and on what he anticipated would be their course with respect to his motion. His taunts did not prevent the Ministry from resisting the motion. But they evidently told notwithstanding. And indeed it is not easy to believe that they did not most materially influence the tone of the resistance which was actually offered.

“Unhappily one cannot expect to find the true grounds for maintaining the Church in Ireland, put forth in a Ministerial Speech in its defence. And here, as before, what I say is not to be confined to the present ministry, for it is no less applicable to their predecessors. Both seem equally anxious to avoid resting their defence of the Church, when they do defend it, upon grounds which would embroil them with the Roman Catholic party; and which would at the same time bind them to the support of the Church under every change of circumstances.

“When such a motion then is resisted by either of the great parties who have for so long alternately held the reins of Government, one cannot look in their speeches for any principle which would prevent them from yielding to a similar motion, or from originating such a one, whenever party interests may render it expedient, and the state of public feeling allow it to be done with safety. And if this motion had been merely resisted upon the insufficient and unsatisfactory grounds to which such policy confines the Government, it would not be deserving of any special notice. But there was something more on the occasion referred to. The member of the Government on whom the office of conducting the resistance to the motion fell, was so stung by the mover’s taunts, that his speech was very much more a vindication of his own and his colleagues’ former attacks on the Church, than of their present support of it. So that, if this had been all that was said in reply to the mover, an uninformed person would naturally have been under the impression, that there was so much truth and force in what was urged against the Church, that it could not be gainsaid. And that, though reasons of State, or of party, policy, obliged the ministry to resist the mover on the present occasion, there could be little doubt that they would be soon on his side; and that it was plain, that, meanwhile, they were unable to make out any good or even plausible reason for prolonging the existence of the flagrant abuse which he was assailing.

“But the case was not allowed to rest in so disadvantageous a position. The able and firm defenders of the Church, the

Members for our University, were at their post. The maintenance of the Church in Ireland was therefore distinctly put upon the true grounds of principle,—of the duty of the State, both to God and to the people. But besides this, the misstatements, and misrepresentations, and exaggerations, and fallacies of the speech by which the motion was introduced, were examined in detail, and thoroughly exposed.

“These speeches have been since published in a pamphlet,—one of the good offices for which the Church stands indebted to the National Club. It may be expected, that this pamphlet will be widely circulated, and that the people of England will thus have in their hands such an abstract of the Statistics of the Church in Ireland, as furnishes a conclusive answer to the persevering misrepresentations by which it is hoped to possess them with the impression, that—waiving all objections to the principle of that Institution,—it in fact abounds in flagrant abuses, calling loudly for the interposition of the Legislature, without which, it is not to be hoped that they can be remedied. They will find that a process of reform has been going on for years, and is still going on, to do the little that remains for it to do; and that under this process,—by the gradual extinction of pluralities, the dissolution of Unions, the abolition of Sinécures, and the enforcement of residence,—almost the whole foundation on which such charges rested has been actually taken away; while, whatever remains is in the course of being removed. The improvement in the Church in Ireland since the time in which these charges originated, is such as could not be exhibited in any merely statistical statement. But such statements at least furnish a conclusive answer to the coarse charges which, in defiance of facts often made public, continue still to be thrown out on every occasion on which they seem likely to make an impression. Those who make the largest use of them, when they have to deal with an uninformed auditory, would probably exercise more reserve in the presence of our University Members if they could. But, as such details are not only put forward publicly outside the walls, whenever the Church is attacked, but as the case against the Church is made mainly to rest on them, they could not of course be held back upon such a motion as the one referred to. And certainly, if a thorough exposure of their unfairness could secure us against their revival, we should hear no more of them. But that is not to be expected. They have survived many a public exposure, and re-appeared after a while, nothing the worse for what they had gone through. And,

doubtless, so it will be with them again. But, meanwhile, it is of the highest importance, that the people of England will have, in their hands,—as I hope, by means of the publication to which I have referred, they are likely to have,—a sober, detailed, and complete refutation of them all. And, especially, they will have before them a complete reply, as every moderate and fair person will regard it, to the argument derived from the disproportion between the income of the Church and its work. This is the primary argument for the reduction and appropriation scheme. And the people of England, to whose judgment and sense of fairness the appeal is so confidently addressed by the enemies of the Church, will see stated there, with a distinctness which challenges refutation, and which affords the utmost facilities for it, if it can be brought forward, that, if the property of the Parochial Clergy were equally divided among the Clergy actually employed in Parochial work, the annual income of each would be but £141 10s. 7d. And that if it were divided among the beneficed Clergy, it would give to each an income of £172 16s. 2d. No one will say that this is an extravagant provision for a Clergyman, in whatever way the provision to be assigned to him is measured. Whether it is by his position, or his wants, or his qualifications, and the labour and expense which it has cost to obtain those qualifications,—or in whatever way the income which he is to receive is to be meted out,—no one will hesitate to pronounce this amount as miserably inadequate. There is therefore but one mode of sustaining the statement, and that is to maintain that the *number* of the Parochial Clergy is extravagantly great. And this is what is actually done. We do not deny, it is said, that some of the Irish Clergy have enough to do. And we regret to say, that among those who are fully worked, there are some very inadequately remunerated. But look at the whole body; will you not find some who have merely nominal congregations, while they have by no means the smallest incomes? And many others, whose flocks are too few to afford anything like adequate employment for a minister? Now, under the congregational system, all such absurd anomalies as Churches and Ministers for no congregations, or next to none, would disappear. And we may add, to the anomaly, wherever it exists, of ministers overtasked and insufficiently paid. Each Clergyman would have adequate occupation, and would be reasonably remunerated. And a large surplus would remain to be applied to whatever object of public utility the wisdom of Parliament may see fit to apply it.

"Now, in the first place, waiving for the present all consideration of principle, this statement which is so confidently put forward, and which makes a serious impression upon many, is false in point of fact ; and Mr. Hamilton's speech supplies every reader with the means of seeing its falsehood distinctly. For it is again stated there, with the same distinctness as before, that each Clergyman so endowed with 172*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* *per annum*, would have, on an average, 589 members of the Church under his care. And this being the case, it is plain how delusive, considered merely with reference to facts and figures, is this scheme which has caught so many. It must be plain that the Congregational principle could not be applied in any reasonable shape to the Church in Ireland, so as to leave any surplus, or at least any of the slightest importance for any public object. Even upon that principle, the *number* of the Clergy could not be very much reduced. While I suppose that scarcely the hardest economist would propose such a remodelling of the Church system, without raising the average *income* of the Clergy who were suffered to remain. And if the reduction and augmentation did not balance the account, it could hardly be expected to leave any considerable surplus.¹ But this surplus, whatever it might be, must be still further reduced, to provide, even on such a scheme, for the indispensable wants of the Church. For if the Clergy be allowed the means of subsistence, some of them must be expected to grow old. A fund therefore would be necessary in order to employ Curates, as they were required, to help those who could do but little, and to supply the place of those who could do nothing. And if this demand did not swallow up the whole surplus, it would leave but a very small residuum indeed for appropriation.

Such would be the result, even if the Congregational principle could be applied. But in fact the circumstances of the case do not admit of the application of it. The members of the Established Church are not at our disposal, to be placed, upon economical principles, within convenient areas, where they may be looked after by the smallest possible number of Ministers. They are already fixed, in irregular proportions, in different parishes—some of the most thinly peopled being of very great extent. It may be that the Church population of many of these parishes is such that it might be increased considerably without overburdening the Clergyman, so far as numbers are concerned. But this cannot be done by uniting one or more of them to an

¹ " Were the congregations increased to 800, and their ministers given 250*l.* *per annum*, the whole fund would be swallowed up."

adjacent parish even supposing, which may not be the case, that there is an adjacent parish of the same class. The result would be to put an unmanageable area under the care of a single Clergyman. He could not extend his pastoral care over the additional parish during the week ; and his new parishioners could not attend his public ministrations on the Sunday. The union would be therefore a mockery as regarded them. They would nominally still possess, but they would really be robbed of, the benefit of a settled Ministry,—of the public instruction and pastoral care, which the Church-Establishment ought to provide for all, and which it actually does provide for them.

“ Every such scheme in fact amounts to the withdrawal of the Parish Clergymen from all the thinly-peopled parishes in the kingdom. This is the certain effect, if it be not the real object, of the substitution of the Congregational for the Parochial System, which has been so often thrown out, and which is likely to be now so importunately pressed. Other most serious considerations might be urged against such a scheme ;¹ but this is of all most decisive. It is not simply the abandonment of the principle of a Church Establishment, but it is abandoning it in the way which is calculated to do most injury to our Church, and to inflict the most fatal wrong upon a large number of the members of the Church. It leaves its endowments to the Church where it might perhaps be able to support itself with out them ; and it takes them away where it is, humanly speaking, impossible that it should sustain itself without such help. So that it is in fact calculated much more surely and more effectually to lower and enfeeble the Church, and to prepare the way for its overthrow, than a scheme for withdrawing endowments from our most populous parishes. And indeed if once the State were beguiled into withdrawing the endowments of the Church in some parishes, because the Church inhabitants were too few to be worth providing a minister for, there can be no doubt that ere long it would be urged to take them away from others, because the inhabitants were numerous enough to provide a Minister for themselves.

¹ “ For example,—in many parishes in which only a few years ago there were scarcely any Church inhabitants, and in some in which there were absolutely none, there are now large congregations formed of converts from the Church of Rome. If this scheme had been carried into effect only ten years since, in all those cases the few Church inhabitants which were then to be found in all those parishes, would now be members of the Church which has supplied such additions to their numbers.”

“But instead of speculating on its remoter effects in the Church at large, let us look only at its immediate operation in the parishes to which it would apply. It would rob the members of our Church who are in thinly-peopled parishes, the provision which is now made for their spiritual instruction, comfort, and guidance, and leave them in youth and in age, in sickness and in health, without any. And what is to become of them? What is to become of the members of the Church in those parishes from which Ministers are thus withdrawn? Would they not be handed over to the Church of Rome, (speaking generally,) with as much certainty as if the measure included the formal transfer of them to that Church? In the next generation, at least, if not in the present one, the whole Protestant population of these thinly-peopled parishes, and their descendants through all succeeding generations, would be members of the Church of Rome, as the necessary result of the proposed procedure. And this is the measure which is seriously proposed to our Protestant State, and which many Protestant Members of the Legislature,—many even who belong to our own Church—are prepared to support!”

THE END.

